

New York Saturday Journal

A HOME WEEKLY FOR WINTER NIGHTS
AND SUMMER DAYS.

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Vol. VI.

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NEW YORK, JUNE 26, 1875.

TERMS IN ADVANCE

(One copy, four months, \$1.00.
One copy, one year, . . . 3.00.
Two copies, one year, . . . 5.00.)

No. 276.

THE FLYING YANKEE; OR, THE OCEAN OUTCAST.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

CHAPTER I.

THE RETURN IN IRONS.

ONE pleasant autumn afternoon, in the year 18—, an armed vessel was majestically sailing toward the land, and heading for a haven within the rock-bound harbor of Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Before a steady four-knot breeze, and with all her canvas spread to greet the welcome wind that filled her sails, the ocean warrior glided on, ever and anon changing her course in a manner that indicated that her helmsman had a perfect knowledge of the circuitous channel.

Astern, the sea was each moment darkening beneath the approach of night, while ahead, the west was a perfect halo of light, for the sun was near its setting, and lit up with prismatic hues the masses of clouds that, couch-like, appeared to await the retiring of the brilliant god of day.

Glancing with fiery vision eastward, over the vast expanse of restless waters, the rays of golden sunlight fell upon the approaching vessel, gliding its tapering masts, casting a rosy tinge upon its voyage-stained canvas, and mingling its rainbow hues with the red, white and blue of the starry emblem of America, that floated above her armed decks.

Though several miles yet lay between the vessel and her destined haven of safety and rest, her decks were crowded with officers and crew, all gazing with interest upon the outlined land, with the glittering spires of Portsmouth in the distance, for in the city were many who were anxiously watching and waiting for the return home of the bold mariners who had so long roamed in foreign seas, though ever attended by kind prayers and wishes for their welfare.

Though joy shone on nearly every face on the vessel's decks, yet it was a joy mingled with sadness, and a certain awe, as ever and anon the eye of officer and seaman would turn from the autumn-tinted forests of the land, and fall upon a shrouded casket resting amidships, infolded in a large flag, and upon either side of which paced a marine with solemn tread; for beneath the ensign rested a human form, whom the loud and ringing cry of "Land ho!" had not startled into busy action, whose eyes gazed not longingly homeward, for the pulse of life beneath that somber canopy had been stilled by the icy touch of death.

Above the decks of the vessel—which was a large brig-of-war, well armed and manned, and stained with the ruddy buffets received in a long voyage—the flags floated at half-mast, a sad tidings to those who watched her approach from the land, that, mingled with their joy at her return, was a cup of bitterness to be drunk in memoriam of one, or more, of her brave crew, gone to that haven beyond the blue skies where storms are never known.

Shortly after sunset the brig-of-war dropped anchor off the town; her sails were quickly furled, and a few moments after a six-oared barge left her side, containing an officer, midshipman and coxswain, besides the seamen, and rowed rapidly away toward the main pier.

"Shove off from the shore, Pierson, and lay on your oars; under no circumstances hold communication with the townspeople until my return," said the officer, in a low tone, to the coxswain, as he sprang upon the shore and beckoned the midshipman to follow him.

Silently threading the dimly-lighted streets of Portsmouth, the officers walked rapidly along, as if familiar with them, until they came to the main thoroughfare, whereon stood a large and massive brick mansion.

"The commodore has company, doubtless, Calvin," said the elder officer, as the two entered the gateway and glanced upon the windows, which shed forth a blaze of light, while merry voices came from within.

"Yes, sir; it is a pity to mingle grief with pleasure," answered the young reeve, as he raised the brass knocker and let it fall with a heavy bang.

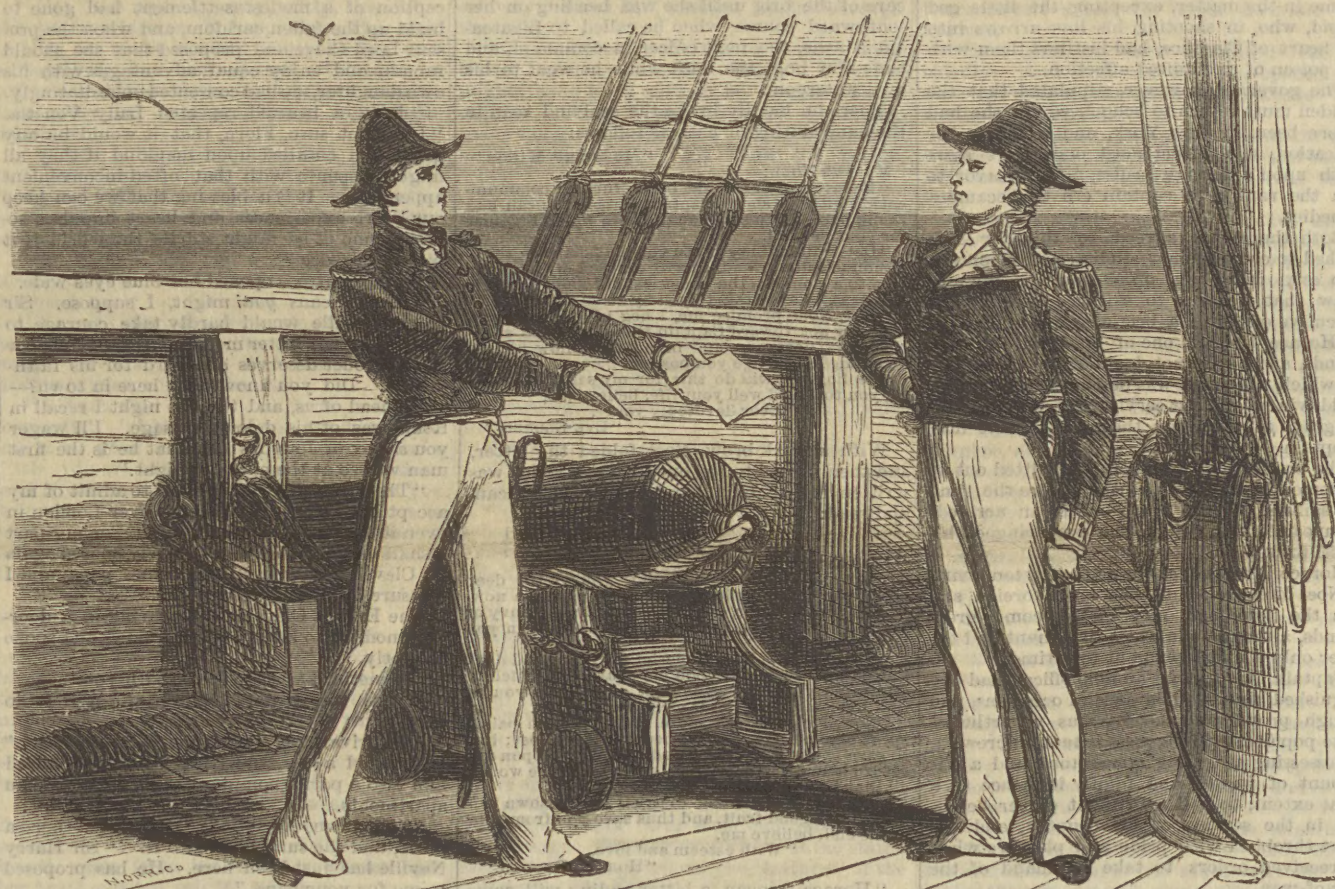
A negro servant in blue livery opened the door, and observing the uniforms of the visitors, said, politely:

"Walk in, gentlemen; the dancing is about to begin."

"We are not here for enjoyment, my man; lead us to a room where we can see Commodore Cutting in private," quickly answered the lieutenant, for such rank the light shining upon his uniform showed him to hold; and in obedience the servant led the way into a small room upon the left of the hallway, and bidding the gentlemen be seated, asked:

"Who am I to tell the commodore wishes to see him?"

"Say simply two officers."



"You heard my words, Captain Duncan, and you see in my hand your letter to Miss Eldred."

"Yes, sir," and the black disappeared, and in five minutes more the door opened, and there entered a man of massive frame and distinguished bearing, clad in the uniform of a United States naval officer.

"Ha! am I to welcome home again Lieutenant Ainslie, of the Vulture, and you also, Mr. Bernard?" said Commodore Cutting, as he advanced into the room and gave each visitor his hand, in a frank, cordial manner.

"Yes, commodore; the brig has just dropped anchor, after two years' absence from home," said Lieutenant Alden Ainslie, a young man of fine appearance, with a manly form and open, daring face, bronzed by long exposure at sea.

"Then why came not Captain Duncan, to report, in person, his arrival?"

"Commodore Cutting, it is with pain I inform you that Captain Duncan is dead."

"Dead! Horace Duncan dead? When did he die?"

"He met his death ere we sailed from Havana, sir, and his body now lies upon the brig, for I determined to bring it home for burial."

"It was kind of you, sir; but, lieutenant, you speak as if you were in command of the brig; where is her executive officer, Lieutenant Moncrief?"

"I regret to say, sir, that he is aboard in irons."

"In irons? Great God! Mr. Ainslie, explain all this mystery: Duncan dead, Moncrief in irons, and you in command of the brig?"

"Bear with me, Commodore Cutting, and I will explain all; and to do so, will say that a coldness existed between Captain Duncan and Lieutenant Moncrief from the day of our sailing from Portsmouth."

"The cause of this ill feeling I am ignorant of, but will state plainly that the captain, upon numerous occasions, was very severe in his manner toward Noel Moncrief, who, in the eyes of all else aboard ship, certainly did his duty; but, be that as it may, five weeks ago, in Havana, while Captain Duncan and Lieutenant Moncrief were ashore, and I in command of the brig, Mr. Bernard, here, came to me and informed me that Lieutenant Moncrief had slain Captain Duncan in a duel."

"Killed his superior officer in a duel! Do I hear aright, Mr. Ainslie?"

"Yes, Commodore Cutting; Captain Duncan and Lieutenant Moncrief met at the American coffee-house ashore; words passed between them, and the result was a challenge."

"Who sent the challenge?"

"Lieutenant Moncrief gave it."

"Bad, very bad," muttered the old commander, musingly.

"Yes, sir, I fear so; but I will let Mr. Bernard relate the circumstance, as he was the second of Lieutenant Moncrief."

"Indeed! A pretty pass are our midshipmen coming to! You, then, carried the challenge, sir?" and Commodore Cutting turned sternly upon the young reeve, who unflinchingly met his gaze, and replied in a firm voice:

"There was no challenge carried, sir; I was with Lieutenant Moncrief, when we met Captain Duncan and a French officer, the commander of a man-of-war then in the harbor."

"Captain Duncan made some remark to Mr. Moncrief; what it was, I do not know, and the lieutenant answered:

"If you were a brave man, Captain Duncan, you would give me a chance to resent your language and conduct toward me."

"I will do so when and where you please," answered Captain Duncan, and Lieutenant Moncrief replied:

"As we sail to-night, let it be now; you have a friend with you, and, with your permission, Midshipman Bernard will act for me."

"He has my permission; so let us take a carriage and drive out of the city's walls, for we wear our swords."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Mr. Moncrief, and half an hour after we were in a retired spot near Havana, and I, having arranged the preliminaries with the French officer, Captain Duncan and Lieutenant Moncrief were soon engaged in a fierce encounter."

"By Heaven! this is a strange and sad affair."

"Yes, sir, and one I was powerless to interrupt; but, to continue: Lieutenant Moncrief soon disarmed Captain Duncan and spared his life; but the captain demanding another bout, the lieutenant ran him through the heart in a very few minutes."

"Terrible! terrible! Our bravest and best officers thus destroying their lives and their reputations; but go on, sir."

"I immediately returned to the city with the body of the captain, and going aboard ship informed Lieutenant Ainslie of what had happened, and he went to the hotel where Lieutenant Moncrief told me he would await him."

"Yes, commodore," said Lieutenant Ainslie, "I immediately went ashore and ordered Captain Duncan's body to be embalmed, for removal home, and found Lieutenant Moncrief awaiting me."

"He did not attempt to escape, then?"

"No, sir; he surrendered himself, and of course I was compelled to put him in irons, to bring him back for trial."

"You did right, sir; it is a sad affair, and will bring great gloom upon our community; but, Mr. Bernard, though I do not censure you as much as I did at first, still you are not ex-

onerated from blame in this matter, and I command you to return to your ship, and there consider yourself a prisoner until further orders."

The young reeve bowed without a word, and turned to leave the room, while the lieutenant, who was about to follow him, was called back by the commodore.

"The news you bring has cast a damper on my evening, Mr. Ainslie, for we were having a little merry-making in my parlors; but I still would be happy of your company."

"Thanks, commodore; I had better return aboard ship, for there are those present who would eagerly ask me about the captain and lieutenant."

"True, true; let the matter be kept quiet until the morning, and then I will come on board. Poor, poor Duncan; poor, poor Moncrief; I feel deeply, alike for the living and the dead," and so saying, the veteran commodore, and commander of the naval forces in and about Portsmouth harbor, warmly shook the hand of the young lieutenant, and after seeing him depart, returned to the gayeties within doors.

CHAPTER II.

MONCRIEF MANOR.

IN the early part of the present century there stood upon the shores of a beautiful, forest-encircled bay, a few miles above the city of Portsmouth, a lordly old mansion built of stone, and surrounded with majestic trees and rolling green lawn, that ended only at the waterside to the eastward, and stretched away landward for miles, for it was a grand old estate, the home of one of the proudest and wealthiest of New England families.

With every comfort and luxury that riches could purchase, lived in that stately mansion Governor Moncrief and his two sons, Noel and Clarence, strangely alike in appearance, but totally different in character; for Noel, who was the elder, was generous and noble, while Clarence was of a more studious nature, gentle as a woman in manner, and loved his books more than his horses, hounds and guns.

Left a widower seven years after his marriage, Governor Moncrief had seemed almost broken-hearted at the loss of his wife, and resigning his high official position, had retired to his country seat, to devote himself to the careful training of his sons, and that they might have every advantage for their cultivation, physically and mentally, he engaged for them instructors in literature, fencing, riding, and filled the library with all kinds of books, the study-hall with guns, pistols and swords, and the stables with horses, while upon the bay were a yacht, sail-boats and row-boats without number.

Thus was nothing neglected in the training of these two youths, and when Noel had reached his sixteenth year he was an adept in every manly sport, as well as a fair scholar, while Clarence was more studious, yet still a proficient in using sword or pistol, sailing a boat or managing a horse.

The result of this training caused Noel to urge his father to get him into the navy as a midshipman, and such a berth the influence of Governor Moncrief easily obtained for his son, and thus at seventeen the eldest brother had entered the service of his country, leaving Clarence at home with his father.

Five years passed away after the departure of Noel ere the young officer again trod his native soil, for the vessel to which he had been ordered upon receiving his appointment, had sailed for the Mediterranean sea, from whence, after a cruise of two years, it had been sent to the South American waters to make war upon the piratical crafts, which had of late been attacking American commerce.

As soon as the anchor had been dropped in the Portsmouth harbor, Noel, who was a great favorite with his commander and brother officers, as well as the crew, obtained leave to take a four-oared cutter and row up to the home-stead, preferring to go that way to driving out with a hired team across country.

It was just after dark when the cutter shoved away from the side of the frigate, and furnishing the men with a hearty supper, plenty of grog, and a comfortable night's lodging, they bent with vigor to their oars and soon left the lights of the city far astern, and wended their way rapidly along the darkly-wooded shores, Noel at the helm, for he had relieved the coxswain of the duty, well knowing every curve of the channel.

On glided the boat for an hour or more, and then turned into the bay that washed the shores whereon the mansion stood, and ere long the lights from the windows gleamed brightly forth over the waters, welcoming the wanderer home after his years of absence.

"Rest on your oars, men," suddenly ordered Noel; as he was obeyed, and the steady dash of the blades in the water and click in the row-locks ceased, there came wafted up on the summer wind over the quiet bay the sound of a bird-like voice singing some beautiful ballad, while, also distinctly heard, was the low thrumming of a guitar.

Entranced, all listened to the strains of melody floating on the wind, now rising clear and ringing, now falling low and thrilling, until the cadence affected even the seamen, and brought a tear of sympathy, caused by some bygone memory, to trickle down the bronzed cheeks.

"A strange, strange sound; a woman's voice in Moncrief Manor," said Noel, half-aloud, and then having waited some moments after the song ceased, as if longing for its renewal, he quietly ordered:

"Give way, men."

Once again came the steady stroke and dash, and once again the cutter glided rapidly along, Noel heading her toward a small pier, hidden almost by the darkly-overhanging forest.

"Lawrence, I wish to surprise them with my unexpected presence, so await here until I return for you," he said, springing ashore as the boat touched.

"Ay, ay, lieutenant, and a happy welcome to you," answered the coxswain.

"Yes, sir, the same to you from us," said the men.

"Thank you, one and all, my lads, and I assure you a hearty welcome will be given you also," and with a light tread and joyful heart, the young officer walked rapidly over the grounds in the direction of the mansion, which loomed grandly up beneath the forest trees.

As he placed his foot upon the first step of the broad stairway, there came once more, the low notes of a guitar, and again the same rich voice of a woman welled forth upon the air, and this time singing a ballad dear to his childhood years, and one which he had often heard his mother sing.

"Who can she be?" he murmured, as she ceased, and then he continued:

"Be she old or young, ugly or beautiful, married or single, I love her for the music in her voice; but if I stand here I shall never know," and so saying he walked gently up the stairway, and stood upon the broad piazza that encircled the mansion.

Through an open window his eyes fell upon the form of a maiden, seated upon a low divan and holding upon her lap a guitar, over the strings of which her fingers were idly straying.

The form was that of a maiden of seventeen, perhaps, with eyes of the deepest blue, lashes long, dark and sweeping, and a brow arched and well marked; the complexion was pure, white and beautifully tinted with health, the

features perfect in mold, the teeth pearl-white and shining between the ruby lips, which were parted as she warbled a few sweet notes.

The form was graceful, slight and beautiful, though a shadow above the average height of beautiful women, while the hair hung in golden masses around her shoulders, for she had loosened it from the heavy silver comb that lay upon the divan beside her.

Noel stood like one spellbound and gazed upon this vision of beauty before him, and his eyes drank in loveliness he had never before beheld in all his wanderings, and mingling with the bellies of foreign lands.

With the impulsiveness of his nature, he sprang forward suddenly before the young girl, and said, gallantly:

"Has the Moncrief Manor become a Paradise, that I behold an angel dwelling here?"

With a slight start and a quick bound the maiden was upon her feet, her beautiful eyes staring with deer-like wonder; but as it realized her position, that she had only been surprised by an exceedingly handsome young man, with superb form, flashing, earnest eyes, and darkly bronzed face, that blended well with the brown mustache and waving hair, she answered, mischievously, while she glanced upon his uniform:

"Were the Moncrief Manor a Paradise, sir, one of your cloth must certainly have gotten astray to cross its portals."

"I cry you mercy, sweet angel—"

"My name is Eve, Sir Flatterer."

"Eve, Eve! Then I do not wonder at Adam having been tempted to partake of forbidden fruit!"

"Worse and worse! I declare you are incorrigible, but, joking aside, I am Eve Eldred, a ward of Governor Moncrief, and you are—"

"Who, fair lady?"

"Noel Moncrief."

"True; I have but just returned home, to find a bright change has come over the mansion, for I knew not of your presence here, a presence that I know has brought sunshine upon the old homestead."

"There, no more compliments, Mr. Moncrief; but come in and allow me to do the honors in the absence of your father, whom, I presume, you have not met as you come alone."

"No; he is not here then?"

"No; he left an hour since, as he learned from a servant a man-of-war was coming up the harbor, and he expected your vessel home about this time."

"Yes, he has just dropped anchor in front of the town; but Clarence, my brother, where is he?"

"You are indeed like a stranger in a strange land, not to know your brother entered the navy a year since."

"Gone into the navy, Miss Eldred? Why, what could have come over the boy to have thus changed his views?"

"It must have been hearing of your distinguished services and rapid promotion," replied the maiden, archly, and then she continued, quickly:

"I hear wheels upon the drive; your father has returned."

A moment after a tall, dignified man stepped from a carriage and quickly ascended the stairway, the next moment to greet with a warm, fatherly welcome his long-absent son.

"Stand off, Noel, and let me look upon you. Why, you are now a magnificent-looking man, even if your father does say it; and, boy, I am proud of you, for your gallant services are known to all; but, how is it I find you here, when I went to meet you?"

"I came in a cutter from the vessel, sir; and that reminds me, I must look after the comfort of my men, who now await me at the pier."

"Certainly; let Thomas go after them and give them supper and comfortable quarters. Eve, my dear, will you tell Thomas, and also see to preparing tea for this wanderer."

"Certainly, sir; I was just intending to do so, when you arrived," answered the young girl, as she arose and left the room.

"Father, to what lucky circumstance do you owe the presence of that lovely creature in the mansion?" asked Noel, as she disappeared.

"Ha, my boy, you are also deceived. I fear she is the daughter of General Eldred, who you know was a distinguished officer in the Revolution, and upon his deathbed, two years ago, he made me the guardian, as well of her property as herself, for she is an heiress."

"This is vacation, and she is now at the mansion for the second time; the first time Clarence had just come home from college, and they became great friends."

"Clarence is now in the navy, Miss Eldred tells me."

"Yes; he gave me no rest until I obtained a position for him, and he is now on a foreign cruise; but, really, I believe Eve drove him there, for she doubts on the service, and spoke so highly of you—"

"Of me, father?"

"Yes; it was about the time you captured that pirate schooner, with accounts of which the papers were full, and finding that Eve would not love him, poor Clarence left home to endeavor to forget her, or to strive to win her by a gallant naval career; but, here she comes, and I warn you, Noel, not to let her steal your heart, for every man in Portsmouth is in love with her."

"I do not doubt it, sir," answered Noel, as he obeyed the call of Eve, and entered the supper-room, where he found a substantial meal awaiting him.

CHAPTER III. THE FALSE FRIEND.

UPON account of their long cruise, the officers of the man-of-war, to which Noel Moncrief was attached, were given by the Secretary of War a leave of absence for three months, and this time the young lieutenant intended passing at home, in the society of his father and the lovely Eve, in whom, at first sight, he had been most deeply interested.

With a character as lovely as her person, Eve Eldred had won the hearts of all who knew her, young or old, and strange to say, for among women it is an exception, she was most popular with her own sex.

Young, beautiful, an heiress, it was not to be wondered at that Eve soon found herself surrounded by hosts of admirers, all willing to offer their hands and fortunes, or, if poor, to share with her their humble earnings.

But to all the maiden had turned a deaf ear, although some surmised that Clarence Moncrief would be the fortunate winner of the prize.

True, he was her most constant companion, and seemed to idolize her very footprints; but then it was natural for him to be much with her, as, being the adopted daughter of Governor Moncrief, the two were daily associates.

Yet Eve Eldred bestowed upon Clarence Moncrief only the affection of a sister, and this the young man soon discovered, to his great mortification, while he listened with real ill-feeling to her praises of his brother Noel, then absent in the service of his country.

At length, finding that his love appeared

hopeless, Clarence determined to strive to win the heart of the fair maiden beneath the uniform of a naval officer, and gave his father no rest until he had gained for him a position in the navy, which the governor had obtained through his great influence with government, although the young man was rather too old for the berth of a midshipman.

Delighted at his success, Clarence had left home, and a year before the return of Noel, had departed upon a foreign cruise, hoping that upon his return he would be able to win Eve to love him.

Yet, though Eve had turned a listless ear to the entreaties of Clarence, it was soon evident that the handsome, daring brother, Noel Moncrief, was not indifferent to her, for hardly had the young lieutenant been at home a month ere the two were deeply in love, the one with the other, so rapidly does love work havoc in the human heart.

Noel compared Eve with all the lovely women he had known, from the German baroness to the Spanish senorita, and candidly confessed to himself that not one of them would compare with the ward of his father; while Eve, upon her part, confessed to her heart that the dark, earnest eyes, and fascinating smile of Noel certainly impressed her more favorably than all the looks and speeches of the generals, commodores, judges, titled foreigners and ordinary citizens whom she had met, and they were not a few, for her father, General Eldred, always had lived in the city of Washington up to the time of his death.

Thus were the two desperately in love, for Eve accompanied Noel on horseback rides, drives, boating excursions, and even went hunting with him some times, while for indoor amusements they sung together, for both had fine voices, sketched together, for each was a fair amateur artist, and read together.

This was dangerous sport for two young, handsome and generous-natured people, as we all know, or should know, reader mine, and the result was just what Governor Moncrief predicted—a love-match that ended in an engagement.

Governor Moncrief willingly gave his consent—though with a pang at thought of the pain it would cause poor Clarence upon his return; but then, he felt that Eve loved Noel and not Clarence, and therefore no one was to blame in the matter, excepting the little god Cupid, who, in shooting his love-arrows into the heart of Clarence, had instilled them with the poison of unrequited affection.

The governor, however, stipulated that the maiden must return to school, where she had before been, in New York, and complete her education, while Noel must once more start forth upon a foreign cruise, and endeavor to win the rank of a captain ere he became a Benedict.

Both the lovers agreed to this, for Eve wished to complete her studies, and Noel was also anxious to win promotion, and already knew that he was to sail, ere long, as the executive officer of a brig-of-war commanded by Horace Duncan, one of his most intimate friends, and he did not doubt, from the service for which the vessel was destined, but that he could win by gallant service a step higher up the grade of promotion that would make him a captain.

The brig-of-war was then being fitted out at Portsmouth, and two months before the time for sailing, Captain Horace Duncan arrived, to superintend in person the preparing of his vessel for sea.

Horace Duncan was the senior, by ten years, of Noel Moncrief, but when on a foreign station the two had met and become great friends, although one was a lieutenant and the other only a midshipman at that time.

Captain Duncan was an able officer, had distinguished himself upon several occasions, and though proud and severe, was nevertheless quite popular with his messmates and crew.

Possessing a striking appearance, and a fair amount of wealth, and family influence to a great extent, he had a brilliant career before him in the service of his country, and his heart throbbed with pride and pleasure when he received orders to take command of the brig-of-war.

Arriving at Portsmouth, he was doubly rejoiced to find that Noel Moncrief was to be second in command, for well he knew the worth of his young friend, while, glad to meet again his former companion, Noel had at once invited him to Moncrief Manor, to become his guest until the day set for sailing, saying he could drive or row to the city every day to look after the fitting out of the brig.

Horace Duncan readily accepted the invitation, especially when it was urged by the governor, and at once removed his traps out to the mansion.

Then for the first time he met Eve Eldred, and from the moment of that meeting became her slave, for he madly loved her.

But, instead of being purified by his love for the beautiful and noble girl, his heart, because cloyed to the promptings of honor, and when he knew that she loved Noel, from that moment he secretly hated his generous-hearted lieutenant, and determined to tear from him, by fair or foul means, the maiden of his love.

With every noble impulse deadened within him, he set to work secretly to destroy the love of the maiden for Noel, and in other cases, where love was less strong, might have succeeded by his many innuendoes cast upon the character of his lieutenant; but, with a woman's penetration and knowledge of human nature, Eve saw through the work of Horace Duncan, and at once made known to Noel all that had been said, and the true character of his supposed friend.

Noel had not suspected aught of Horace Duncan; but when his eyes were opened to his villainy, he became thoroughly aroused and determined to demand an explanation of his unwarrantable conduct in thus abusing the privilege of a guest, to injure him with the woman of his love.

Just as he had come to this determination, Horace Duncan entered the room, holding in his hand an official-looking document, while he said, quickly:

"Noel, I have just received orders from the Secretary of the Navy to sail at once for the Caribbean Sea, where I am to be sent on the service of pirate-hunting, and most fortunate is it that you are to be with me, for your knowledge of these waters is, I believe, considerable."

Noel Moncrief choked back the words that had risen to his lips, and as the orders to depart would take Captain Duncan and himself away from the society of Eve, he determined not to speak upon the matter to his commander, though he felt that he could never again be friends with him.

"I am glad we have to go, captain, although the orders are sudden; when do you intend to sail?"

"To-morrow night; and now I must take my leave of your father and Miss Eldred, for my duties aboard ship will keep me busy," and in half an hour more Horace Duncan was driving to Portsmouth, while his heart was filled with bitter hatred toward Noel, and the determination to, in some way, get rid of him during the voyage, that he might return and claim Eve as his bride.

The next morning Noel bade farewell to his father and Eve, and by noon was on board the brig-of-war, which soon after weighed anchor, and stood out of the harbor before a light breeze.

Gliding quietly along, while her captain was in the cabin, preparing his last dispatches to be sent ashore by the pilot, Noel, who was in command of the deck, desisted a small fishing-boat standing out from the rock-bound coast, and heading so as to meet the brig.

In the skiff were two persons, one of whom stood in the bow and waved toward the brig, as if to attract the attention of those on board.

"Let her luff, helmsman; more yet, for I would speak yonder boat," said Noel, and in a few moments the light skiff was alongside and a rope thrown to the occupants.

"Well, sir, what excuse have you for boarding one of Uncle Sam's sea warriors in this style?" said Noel, to one of the men who sprang upon the brig's deck.

"I have an important letter, sir, for Lieutenant Moncrief."

"Ha! I am Noel Moncrief; give it me."

The fisherman drew from his pocket a letter, and handing it to Noel, said:

"A young lady came down to the shore on horseback, and said she would give me a gold ten if I would sail out and head off the brig, so that you might get it."

"You have done well, my man, and here is a twin gold piece for you; but hold, there may be an answer."

"No, sir; she went right away, and said there was no answer."

"All right; go to the mansion of Governor Moncrief, seek the young lady, and let her know you delivered the package."

"I will, sir; thank you, lieutenant, for the gold, and a pleasant cruise and safe return to you," answered the fisherman, politely, as he sprang into his skiff, which at once fell astern of the brig.

Too thorough an officer to neglect his duties, to read what he believed only a last-kind word from Eve, Noel devoted himself wholly to the care of the brig until she was heading on her southward course, when he called to Lieutenant Ainslie, the next officer in command, and bade him hold the deck while he went to his own stateroom.

There he hastily broke the seal and read in the handwriting of Eve, as follows:

"MY OWN NOEL:—

Believing there would be no further communication with the shore, Captain Horace Duncan had the impudence to send me the note which I enclose for your perusal.

Determined to prove to you his falsity as a man of honor, I had a letter from him, and he had ridden to a point on the coast which I know the brig will pass, to send this to you by some fisherman.

But, Noel, promise me, I pray of you, that you will only act toward Captain Duncan as his superior rank demands, and in no way allow him to know the knowledge you possess.

I will do this for you, for my sake, and urging you to guard well your life, believe me, "Ever devotedly yours,"

"EVE ELDRÉD."

With a dark brow, Noel folded the letter, and then turned to the one inclosed, which was written in the bold hand of Horace Duncan, and read:

"BASIS OF WAR, VULNERABLE, Portsmouth Harbor."

"MISS EVE ELDRÉD:—

LADY:—With again telling you of the deep and never-changing love I feel for you, let me now, in this parting hour, and with no feeling of envy or jealousy, warn you against the man to whom you are betrothed.

I have known Noel Moncrief for years, and dark indeed are the stains upon his character, which, if moved to the light, would cause you to tear his image from your memory.

Now, I cannot say more, and it is with pain I speak against one that has been my kind host; but to save you is my excuse, and believe me, upon my return home, I will prove to you, and to the world, all that I say regarding him.

Trusting the seed of distrust I have sown will bring forth good fruit, and thus save you from ruin in the end, believe me,

"With esteem and love,"

"HORACE DUNCAN."

"Horace Duncan, a bitter ending will come to either you or me, for this."

"Sir,"

Noel glanced quickly up, and saw standing before him his commander, his face, pale with rage.

"You heard my words, Captain Duncan, and you see in my hands your letter to Miss Eldred; henceforth between you and me only shall there be the courtesy due to duty."

"Where did you get that letter?"

"A fisherman brought it to me, half an hour since."

"Then you know me, Noel Moncrief?"

"Ay, that I do, Horace Duncan; but between us let there now be no quarrel, until the end of this cruise, for our services are at present devoted to our country, and as my commander I will obey your every order," and Noel gazed sternly into the face of the man before him.

"So be it,"

Thus it was the good brig Vulture started forth upon her voyage, with her captain and lieutenant feeling the bitterest hatred for each other in their hearts, though outwardly there appeared to be a friendly understanding between them.

(To be continued.)

The Terrible Truth:

OR,
THE THORNHURST MYSTERY.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,

AUTHOR OF "STRANGELY WED," "THE FALSE WIDOW," "ADRIA, THE ADOPTED," "CO-

RAL AND RUBY," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN ANOTHER SPHERE.

IT WAS New Year's Day in "Merrie England"—New Year's Day in a suite of elegant apartments in St. James' street, London.

It was six o'clock of the afternoon, and two ladies in rich evening toilets stood under the soft lights shining down over the magnificent appointments of the room. It was a velvet-lined casket holding two priceless jewels—one a sparkling koh-i-noor, the other a fairy pearl.

"I wonder if there is any sensation in the world powerful enough to move that calm dignity of yours, Venetia! Here am I, half wild with delight at being in London once more, and you are the same iceberg you were in France, in Italy, sailing the blue Mediterranean, or finding congenial frigidity among the Alps. Little wonder people say that, like Minerva, you lack a heart."

The little blonde threw herself petulantly into a chair, gave her azure flounce a shake, and glanced half in vexation, half admiringly at the other's stately form. A fair, childlike, golden-haired creature, whom no one would have suspected of having three years of widow-

hood lying behind her. It was true, nevertheless, Flora, Lady Montrose, relic of the late Lord Charles, was little more than twenty now, scarcely less of a giddy, thoughtless child than when she had given her hand to the Earl's son, four years previous to this New Year's Day of 1878. Lord Charles, a hare-brained, horseracing young nobleman, with as many faults and as few virtues as any one man of his class is often found to possess, had been flung from his horse while following the chase, and was taken up dead.

The shock had killed the old earl surely as knife or ball could have done. Twin tablets were erected to their memory, for two entire months the young widow was inconsolable. The crape on her mourning dresses could not be made deep enough, the silence of the house could not be too intense, it was cruel that the sun should shine, the blue sky expand its dazzling arch, and people be gay in the same world with grief like hers.

But, one morning, my Lady Montrose awoke to the fact that her bright eyes were dulled by constant weeping; that she was growing thin and pale, moping to death in the lonely country house where she had persisted in shutting herself alone. "She must make an effort; she must break the morbid gloom which had held her a victim. The arrival of the new earl in a measure solved her difficulty. At the first intimation of his coming she wrote a piteous letter of appeal to a relative in town. She could not endure to remain there while a stranger occupied the dear old earl's place—the place she had hoped to see filled some day by her own darling Charles. Would she open her heart and home to the poor, friendless little cousin who never, never could recover from her own crushing grief? She would try to be cheerful for the sake of others, but she felt that this deeprooted sorrow was wearing her life away, she would not long remain alone and lonely upon the earth.

A favorable answer was received, and my Lady Montrose flew like a wounded dove to the West End refuge. For one whose life was wearing away she soon developed a remarkable degree of interest in worldly affairs. With opening spring and the fashionable season she accepted an invitation from the new earl, and returned to Cleveland Park and the Sussex downs. Her own fortune with the exception of a modest settlement had gone to build up the fallen earldom, and when the present Lord Cleveland proposed that she should remain and enjoy equal advantages with his own daughter, she had consented unhesitatingly.

"Lack a heart!" repeated Lady Venetia. "I am not sure, Flora, that it would be any great evil entailed upon mankind if they all might dispense with that often-inconvenient appendage. It is a blessing that we can keep our heart experiences and heart impulses secret; some of us might startle the world if it were otherwise."

Lady Montrose opened her blue eyes wide. "That means you might, I suppose, Sir Harry Neville would hardly take courage to see you in that bitter mood, Venetia. The poor little baronet deserves a reward for his faithfulness. Did you know he is here in town?—here ahead of us, and the last night I recall in Rome was of his dolorous visage. I'll wager you a box of Jouvin's best that he is the first man we see at the opera to-night."

"The probability is too great to admit of my accepting. You are rejoicing over London in even its present deserted state. For my part I shall be glad when we are safely housed again at Cleveland Park. Here comes papa, and I am sure he will agree with me."

The Earl of Cleveland appearing in a doorway nodded to his nephew's widow, and spoke abruptly.

"Venetia, I wish to speak with you."

"With me, papa? Certainly. Will it do here?"

"In private for a moment. Come this way."

He walked away, and Lady Venetia followed him into a parlor communicating with his own apartments.

"Sit down, Venetia." He placed her a chair, and she sank back into it. "Sir Harry Neville has just been here. He has proposed to me for your hand."

She sat with her eyes downcast, her fingers toyed with a diamond bracelet upon her arm, silent for a moment, and then her father spoke again.

"Have you no remarks to make, Venetia? I presume you heard what I have been saying."

"I heard—yes. Of course you did the proper thing and sent him away, papa."

"Of course I did nothing of the kind. I referred him to you, since it appears the baronet's courage has yet failed in consulting you. Just as well, perhaps, since it leaves me an opportunity to say a word. You have refused many eligible offers and I never pressed you before. I do desire now that you put all absurd prejudices aside, and accept Sir Harry Neville's proposal."

"Papa!"

The dark eyes were raised to meet his fully now; there was no flinching, no shrinking away from his stern glance.

"You appear to forget how the years are slipping away, Lady Venetia. The heyday of youth and its romantic nonsense has passed for you. You can't expect to go all your life unwed. Sir Harry is an exemplary man, one of the world's masculine angels only lacking wings. You can take no exception to him surely, titled, wealthy, and devoted as you could wish a lover. You are very lovely now, my Lady Venetia—no need for me to tell you that—you can have your choice among the flower of this fair land. But that will not last for always. After your past experience it would be the height of folly to go on throwing away chances as you have done thus far. I say again, put absurd prejudices aside and marry Sir Harry Neville, when he asks you."

"Papa, marry him!" A thrill of horror accented the words.

"I have said it, my daughter. An earl's daughter, remember you are that, and do no discredit to the blue blood in your veins."

"An earl's daughter should never dishonor herself. Father!"—the tone was a thrilling appeal. She rose to stand before him, her head bowed, her hands clasped, her face marble white and dark eyes intense with pain; no one of her admirers but would have found it hard to recognize in her thus moved the haughty Lady Venetia Montrose, whom adulation never changed, flattery spoiled, nor princely notice flattered.

Her father was correct. She was lovely, she had always been that through the worst days of their grinding poverty, and now with magnificent surroundings, in silks and jewels, with servants to wait at her slightest beck, she was on every one's tongue as the handsomest belle in metropolitan society during the year.

"Father!" Thrilling, pain-charged, her voice lingered over his name. "I have thought you knew I could never marry. Even were I so inclined, there is a reason why I never should. Oh, papa! is there need that I should say more?"

"That will do, Venetia. You are not given to high tragedy commonly. Pray, do not resort to stage effect now. I have known, I do know, all. You are clinging to the remembrance of a man who wearied of you in a few short weeks—who threw you over for the next pretty face he came across. You are holding yourself bound, when every equitable law would declare you free."

"Father, I am his legal wife."

"You persist in holding yourself as such. I tell you I know all about that night flight and the ceremony performed—do you suppose I would get a hint of it and not search all out? I declare that you are free, that any law to which I might appeal would declare you so today. I shall not appeal to law, and thereby attach the stigma which revelations would bring upon our name. If you have any fear that Owen Dare may ever assert a claim upon you, dismiss it from this hour. However great his own inclination might be, there is a reason why he never should. Must I command you, Venetia, to obey my wishes regarding this offer of marriage from Sir Harry Neville?"

The white face was lifted; she returned his gaze with one so steady that it seemed his own must fall before it, but it did not.

"Heaven's ordinance of marriage is not lightly put aside. For better or worse I am—his wife!" her lips faltered and refused to pronounce his name. "I will never forget that—I can never marry another man!"

Her will could be no less resolute than his; her set face told him how irrevocable that decision was.

"Very well, Venetia!" His sharp, metallic tone cut her like a pain, the steely gleam in those cold blue eyes flashed upon her. "You have disappointed the hopes I have based upon you all your life. If the time ever comes when I shall make a return in like measure—and it may come sooner than you think—if I am merciless then recall this night, and the keen disappointment my long forbearance has not merited. Do not consider yourself longer detained."

She bowed her head and was turning away as a rap sounded upon the door.

"Come in!" said the earl.

A servant appeared upon the threshold, announcing—"Mr. Harding, your lordship."

Mr. Harding, who was the earl's solicitor, catching sight of the Lady Venetia, pressed forward.

"My obedience to your lordship," with a bow.

"I took the liberty of following, close, as I have what appears to be a most important message to deliver to Lady Venetia Montrose."

"For me?" The Lady Venetia waited in some surprise.

"Here it is. It was given me to be forwarded. Fortunately I learned of your arrival something less than an hour ago, and knew of course you had not received my own dispatch."

The Lady Venetia glanced at the brief lines, and held the paper toward her father with a wavering hand. It was the message interpolated in that to Sir Rupert's lawyer.

almost three years. My succession to the family title and estates called me suddenly away. I was at Thornhurst on that New Year's eve. The colonel and myself had not been on warm, friendly terms, and I went with the avowed intention of having smooth feeling between us. I had a deeper object which I did not mention; it was to discover all I could regarding a young man stopping at Thornhurst, and who held the confidence of the deceased, Owen Dare, now present in the court. I had carefully sought out all the reports regarding the difference between Colonel Vivian and his son; and from some circumstances I suspected Dare of having worked to bring the quarrel about. I had no intention of interfering in the matter; it was to my interest to hold some power over Dare, and it was that which I was seeking to obtain. I chanced to be standing near the colonel when a servant approached to announce that a person whose business was imperative awaited him in the library. He left the room immediately and did not return.

I strolled out of the crowd presently. I had lost sight of Dare; I had learned as much of him as I could glean from casual conversations, and I looked about for my daughter with the intention of returning home early. She was not to be found. The company had assembled in the drawing-rooms to watch the Old Year out and the New Year in. I sauntered through one of the deserted passages to enjoy a cigar while I waited. There was a window at the end, wide open, and the lamp in the passage was turned down to a feeble glimmer. A stream of light from the glass door of the library fell across the veranda and upon the snow without. I stood with my cigar and match-box in hand, but put them back when I saw a man step cautiously out of the shadow, lean forward and gaze intently for a moment into the library. I saw his face distinctly for that moment, then he drew back as a shadow fell across the light. Just at that the clock began striking twelve. As the last stroke sounded the man I watched put out his hand; there was a flash, a report, the shattering of glass, and a heavy fall within the room. I swear that I saw the deed committed, and that the murderer was Owen Dare.

The sea of breathless, intense faces was turned toward him; no sound stirred the crowded court; jury and judge were held with the same absorbed interest. "He hurled the pistol away, and the next instant sprung through the window by which I stood; he paused to pull the window shut, and rushed out through the darkened passage. I followed and saw him burst into the library, heard him utter loud exclamations of pretended horror and grief at the sight meeting him there. The people were panic-stricken, and I did what I could to bring about order. I did not tell what I had seen either then or afterward. I had no desire to become mixed in a criminal case, and I had reason then for wishing to be the man to hunt Owen Dare to the fate he deserved. I left for the South that New Year's Day, and a couple of months later received news of my accession to an earldom. My daughter and myself made immediate preparations for our voyage, and embarked from New York on the twenty-second day of March, the two weeks previous being passed in the city."

Here the prosecuting attorney interposed. This matter was irrelevant. It did not bear upon the case in hand. "I am coming to that. The business occupying me in the city was connected with the researches I had chosen to make regarding Owen Dare. I put a lawyer, one of the third-class, conscienceless sort, upon his back-track. I instructed him to find out the truth of the post-obit affair, and the mystery about the payment of Vane Vivian's debts; he was to find out that much, if possible, out of the Jew money-broker, Abraham Moses. I was to pay him in proportion to the information he brought me, and that was to end his share of the affair. On the second day before we sailed he came to me with rather startling news. Moses had been stabbed in a gambling affray by one of his own clique. The latter had fled; the former lay upon his death-bed. He had avowed his willingness to make a confession, which he did in my presence a few hours later.

"Dare had come to him early of the previous November, said he had game in view which he would throw in Moses' way if he would divide the spoils. After some fencing on both sides, he made his proposition. Young Vivian was the game. A partner known as the 'Vampire' was taken into confidence. Young Vivian had walked straight into the snare. They had stripped him of all the money he could raise, and then Dare suggested binding him by a post-obit. That also was done, and the Jew repented when the outbreak occurred between father and son. Afterward a small lawyer, very much of the same class to which my spy belonged, had made a proposition in Colonel Vivian's name to redeem the paper for the value on its face. He had disinherited his son, but he did not wish his name dishonored; he made it a condition in his payment of the debt that his action should be kept strictly secret. The Jews were glad to agree; checks for the amount were produced, and the paper given in exchange. Later, the checks were pronounced forgeries, and the wrathful Moses, close as his general spirit was, had spent a thousand dollars in discovering that the agent who had shielded himself behind the pettifoggery lawyer was Owen Dare. He had sworn a revenge upon him which I haven't a doubt he would have kept but for his untimely end. He died from effects of his wound, and I have his confession, written out and legally attested, here. I think it will appear that Dare had some deep object leading to such systematic method in the ruin of his friend."

The almost painful silence which had reigned was broken by a general movement and murmur through the court as the earl concluded his statement. Vane Vivian was free! Owen Dare, the exemplary, moral young man, possessing everybody's confidence, had the crime of murder fixed upon him, together with other crimes indicating deeper subtlety, greater villainy of heart and malevolence of spirit, than the wildest, maddest follies which a man might commit. The murmur rose to an angry roar as it was discovered that Dare's place, which he had occupied up to a few moments ago, was vacant. What an oversight to have given him the opportunity of escape!

And Owen Dare! He had sat like one bewildered when first the Lady Venetia began to speak. He had heard her testimony overthrow the whole deep scheme by which he had sought to ruin Vane. He had heard the earl relate what he had seen—had listened with the same breathless fascination which held the crowd. He heard his own name, and knew he had been denounced as the murderer. The muscles about his mouth twitched, his hands trembled. He looked about him—every eye was turned toward the witness-stand, every ear strained to catch the evidence. He did not see one pair of keen eyes which, since the turn the trial was taking, had never wavered from himself. He slipped from his place and through the unheeding throng. He reached the door; he stepped without and a heavy hand came down upon his shoulder. Lord Cleveland had engaged to hunt him down, and Lord Cleveland had neglected no precaution.

Dare looked apathetically at the officer. "Be quiet and come along with me. You'll be in demand here soon enough, Mr. Dare. Will you give me your word of honor to try no slippery dodges, or will you wear these?" A pair of significant-looking handcuffs appeared above his pocket. In one instant more that officer saw many stars as ever blazed in the firmament. Dare's right hand went out to strike him, a stunning blow between the eyes; then Dare himself was gone like a flash. The officer, staggering, catching himself, recovering, had lost the bird that was in his very hand.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 262.)

Overland Kit: THE IDYL OF WHITE PINE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "WITCHES OF NEW YORK," "WOLF
DEMON," "WHITE WITCH," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXI. THE FLY-LEAF AGAIN.

FOR A SECOND only the dark figure, crouching beneath the stairs, kept the revolver at its poise, then the calmer second thought stayed the murderous hand. He dropped the muzzle of the pistol toward the floor, and again eagerly bent forward to listen.

Unconscious of his danger, unconscious that a foeman's hand had been raised to deal him the death stroke, Talbot gazed with a glance of tenderness into the little brown face, whose eyes looked so lovingly into his own.

Gently he kissed the low, sweet forehead, the blushing cheeks, and the golden fringed eyelids.

"You are willing to risk all, then?" he said, "willing to give yourself into my charge, forever and forever."

"Yes," she replied, lowly, softly, dreamily; she was in a heaven of happiness. The hour of bliss, for which she had prayed so long and so hopelessly, had come at last. The sense of joy which thrilled through her being seemed to take away her breath; she was faint with happiness.

"In spite of all that I have said, you love me!" Talbot asked, slowly. "My past life may be stained with crime; my present isn't any too good; in fact, couldn't be much worse, yet you love me, angel that you are!"

"Oh, Dick, I am but a poor, weak girl, strong only in love," Jinnie replied, nestling her head, coyly, on his breast.

"You are playing a desperate game, Jinnie, to stake a priceless love like yours against the weak, wavering passion that has to struggle for its existence in my heart."

"I don't fear a bit, Dick," she answered, earnestly. "I know that you would not ask me to be your wife if you did not love me a little; you do love me, too, generous for that; and if you do love me a little, I shall give you so much love in return that you will not be able to help loving me a great deal, even if you tried not to, and I know that you won't do that."

Perfect faith shone in the clear eyes of the girl as she uttered the simple speech.

"No, Jinnie, you're right," Talbot said, quickly. "I shall try to love you with all my heart. It can't be possible that I shall fail, for a passion as pure and strong as yours must meet with its reward. From this time forth you are the only woman in the world that I shall think of; I will forget that any other woman lives."

A quick, joyous flush came over Jinnie's face; never before had she heard words that seemed so sweet in her ears. A long-drawn breath came from between her scarlet lips; her heart was too full for words.

"By the by, Jinnie," said Talbot, suddenly, "you remember the night that Judge Jones arrested me?"

"Yes," Jinnie answered, her eyes shining.

"Something happened then that has puzzled me a little; I meant to have spoken to you about it before, but forgot it."

"What is it?" Jinnie asked, her face flushing.

"Why, about that Bible; what reason had you for tearing the fly-leaf out of it?"

A half-smile came over the girl's face, and a soft, shy light shone in her eyes.

"There was something written on the leaf that I didn't want anybody to see," she said, slowly.

"Something written on the leaf?" he questioned, in astonishment.

"Yes, something that I wrote there."

"What was it, Jinnie?"

The girl drew the crumpled leaf from its warm hiding-place close to her heart; but, as she placed it in Dick's hand, she hesitated, still retaining her grasp upon the paper, and looked up, shyly, into his face.

"I suppose you'll think that I'm real silly, but I couldn't help it, Dick. If you hadn't asked me to be your wife, I should never have shown it to you."

"If your love for me prompted your hand when you wrote, I shall not be apt to think that it is silly," Talbot replied, smiling.

"Look, then."

Jinnie relinquished her grasp on the crumpled bit of paper and again nestled her head down on Talbot's breast.

Dick smoothed out the crumpled leaf, and by the aid of the moonbeams, examined it.

On the leaf were two written lines; two names; one traced beneath the other. A smile came over Dick's face as his eyes rested on the lines. The two names were:

"Jinnie Johnson."

"Jinnie Talbot."

The girl had coupled her name with that of the man she loved.

"You poor girl!" cried Talbot, quickly and earnestly. "I am not worthy such a love as yours, but for your sake I'll try to be. If Heaven will only help me in time I may be able to love you as you ought to be loved."

Jinnie returned the precious paper to its former hiding-place.

"I should have felt so mean if Judge Jones had seen that," she said.

A thoughtful expression came over Talbot's face. An idea had come to him.

"Jinnie," he said, abruptly, "can you tell why Judge Jones hates me?"

"I—I think I can," the girl answered, a little confused.

"Has the Judge ever professed any love for you?" Talbot asked, guessing at the truth from the look upon the girl's face.

"Yes."

"I thought so!" Dick exclaimed. "And you told him that you could not care for him?"

"Yes," Jinnie again replied.

"And he guessed that you cared for somebody else—for me?"

"Yes," he said; that he could guess who it was that backed me up in the Eldorado."

"He meant me, I suppose?"

"I felt sure that he did; it was real hard for me. I hadn't any idea that he cared anything for me, and it took me by surprise."

"Now I understand why the Judge hates me," Talbot said, thoughtfully. "I am in his way, and he has tried his best to get me out of it. The Judge and I will have to have a settlement one of these days, I'm afraid. I've an idea that he's a pretty big scoundrel, in spite of his quiet, smooth way."

"I must go down and close up, Dick; where are you going to stop to-night?"

"Down at the shanty."

"There's room here."

"No, I'll go down there; I came up on purpose to see you. I felt that we ought to have an understanding, and now my mind's easier; good-night."

A half-dozen warm kisses he pressed upon the willing lips, and then took his departure. As the two descended the stairs, they met Tendl coming up, supported by Ginger. Bill Gains was under the influence of liquor as usual.

"How are you, Miss Jinnie?" Gains exclaimed, with a vain attempt to stand up without Bill's assistance, the consequence of which was that he nearly tumbled headlong down the stairway, carrying Bill with him.

"Look a-hyer! you're a durned sight wuss'n a mule, you are, you drunken cuss, you!" Bill exclaimed in anger. "How kin I hold you up, ef you're a goin' to wabble round this way? You'll fall down an' break that precious neck of yours, an' then we can all jine in the funeral."

"I guess that somebody would be mighty glad if I broke my neck," Gains stammered, with a thickened tongue. "I reckon that somebody wouldn't 'pan out' to-morrow if I broke my neck to-night. Oh, no! I haven't a gold mine—haven't struck a 'lead'—don't know what 'I say dirt' is much, you bet!"

By this time, Gains and Bill had reached the landing, and Talbot and Jinnie had entered the saloon below.

"What in thunder are you talking about, anyway?" asked Bill, steering Tendl through the entry.

"Oh, wouldn't you like to know?" cried Gains, with a drunken laugh. "You're mighty cute, but I ain't to be pumped; I'm a regular sponge, I am. I know something that's worth a pile of rocks. I'll make another strike to-morrow, or I'll know the reason why."

"Shut up, you mutton-head!" exclaimed Bill, indignantly; "you've got more gab than a she-woman!"

"Bill, I'll stand treat in the morning; I swear I will!" Gains cried.

"Just you go to bed an' sleep off some of the tanglefoot you've got on board now, afore you talk about any more histing." And Bill pushed open the door of Gains' room and placed the almost helpless man inside. There was a candle burning on the table. Bill tumbled Tendl over on the bed.

"Are you all right, old hoss?" he asked.

"You bet! set 'em up!" ejaculated Gains, stretching himself out on the little bed.

"Guess I won't blow out the light, ne may sober off enough to git up an' undress," Bill remarked, communing with himself, for Gains was already half-asleep.

Bill paused at the door to take a farewell look at his drunken friend. A few days of reckless dissipation had greatly changed Tendl.

"He's got whisky enough on board to run a small-sized grist-mill. Ef he keeps on h'ist'n' that'll be a famine in the whisky line putty soon rotting away."

Bill closed the door and proceeded down stairs again.

Hardly had he closed the door below behind him, when a dark form stole cautiously along the passage. Pausing at the head of the stairs, the moonlight shone on the features of the "Heathen Chinee."

CHAPTER XXXII. A TERRIBLE DISCOVERY.

IN the saloon, Bill found young Rennet and Dandy Jim.

"How is our friend and backer now?" asked Rennet, referring to Gains.

"Drunk as a b'iled owl," replied Bill, tersely. "I've corraled him in bed, though, an' I s'pose he'll snooze the pison out of him. Talk bout h'ist'n'! Why, he kin h'ist more, tanglefoot than any other man of his inches in Spur City for rocks, now you bet!"

"Who's my anselope fur a leetle game of poker?" asked the man-from-Red-Dog, defiantly, drawing out his bag of gold-dust as he spoke.

"I reckon I'll jine in the services," replied Bill.

"If you've got any more money than you know what to do with, I don't mind relieving you of some of it," observed Rennet, carelessly.

"Oh, come fur me, now!" cried the Red-Dog, persuasively. "I'm your meat, I am!"

So, without more ado, the three sat down to a table; Dandy Jim produced the "papers," and they "went for" each other lively.

The game continued with varying fortune for an hour or so; then, Rennet, growing tired, announced his intention of going to bed, much to the disgust of the man-from-Red-Dog.

"What sort of a cuss are you, anyway?" Jim exclaimed, in an aggrieved tone. "I reckon that when a gent sits down fur to play poker, it's a duty he owes to society fur to keep sot till he's bust'ed."

"Well, if the cards keep on running as even as they have for the past hour we might play till doomsday and be neither poorer nor richer for it," Rennet answered.

"Just as lief play till old Gabriel toots his horn as not!" Jim exclaimed.

"You're as contrary as a mule!" Bill cried. "See hyer, I'm six bits ahead of the game, so I'll stand treat. We'll all take a nightcap and turn in. Nominate your pison."

With a growl, Jim yielded to the wishes of the others, and consented to be "pisoned," as Bill expressed it. Then Jim bade the two good-night, and left the saloon.

The Heathen Chinee was not in attendance as usual, but a sharp lad who acted as his assistant.

Rennet and Bill proceeded up-stairs. As they came to the door of Tendl's room, they paused and listened. The candle was still burning within, for they could see its light through the cracks of the door.

"I reckon the durned cuss is asleep," Bill said, after listening for a moment.

"I don't hear any thing," Rennet observed.

"Nary a snore; he's in the arms of Murphy, as Faddywhack Doolin would say," Bill said, with a grin.

Hardly had the words left the lips of the

stage-driver when a sound came from the room occupied by the drunken man, which caused the two, in the entry to stare at each other in blank astonishment. The candle that Bill carried in his hand shook, and the flame wavered on the air as though agitated by a sudden gust of wind.

"What the deuce was that?" exclaimed Rennet in astonishment.

"Durned ef it didn't sound like a groan," said Bill, softly.

"Yes, it did."

"I reckon it made me shake, jest a bit; it come so sudden-like; took a feller clear under the ear and h'isted him off his pins; I s'pose he's having bad dreams."

"Hain't we better go in and see if we can do any thing for him?"

"I reckon not; he's only a-cavortin' a leetle in his sleep, that's all. He'll be all right in the morning," Bill answered.

"Well, now, it sounded to me just as if the man was in deadly pain," Rennet said, a strange apprehension of evil coming over his soul.

"It is kinder skeery fur to hear a sound like that in the night, you know; I reckon that a man who wouldn't be afraid to face a dozen injuns single-handed in the daylight, would run like the mischief from a thing that he thought was a spook, at night."

"Your head is level there, Bill; but we're standing here like a couple of children; shall we go in or not?"

"Ef I thought that critter wasn't all right—I guess, on the hull, that we had better go one eye on him, anyway."

"Go ahead."

But as Bill placed his hand on the door-knob, there came from the room within a low, hollow moan; a cry so full of human anguish that it paled the cheeks of the two strong men and filled their hearts with terror.

"Did you hear that?" questioned Bill, nervously, pausing; with his hand on the door-knob.

"Yes; it sounded like a death-moan," replied Rennet, unconsciously lowering his voice to a whisper.

"Durned ef I ain't afraid to open the door, an' I don't know what I'm afraid of either."

"He's only groaning in his sleep, that's all," Rennet said, reassuringly; yet, in his own heart, he felt a fear for which he could not account.

"Hyer goes, anyway!" exclaimed Bill, decidedly. And with the word, he opened the door and entered the little room, Rennet following close behind.

A single look the two men gave at the motionless form that lay upon the bed, and then a smothered cry of horror burst from their lips.

A terrible sight indeed they looked upon. Gains Tendl lay upon his back in the bed, his coat off, and his shirt-front stained with blood, that welled from a dozen stabs in his breast. The truth flashed upon the two white-faced men at once; Gains Tendl had been murdered!

"This is awful!" Bill exclaimed, solemnly.

Rennet did not reply, but stepped forward and examined the body. Not one, but a dozen, stabs cut the red life-blood. It was plain the victim had been surprised in his drunken slumber, and had been struck without giving him a chance for his life.

"Is he gone up?" questioned the stage-driver, anxiously.

"Yes, he's dead," Rennet replied, convinced at a single glance that such was the case. "Who could have committed this bloody deed?"

"We need the Vigilantes round hyer-right sharp, I reckon," Bill said, earnestly.

"We had better give the alarm at once; we may be able to discover the murderer!" Rennet exclaimed, moving toward the door.

"Say, I'll go with you; I wouldn't stay hyer alone for a heap of gold-dust!" Bill cried, quickly, and following Rennet as he spoke.

The two went out into the entry and closed the door carefully behind them. Rough, reckless men as they were, there was something terrible in the sight, in the cold, silent, blood-stained form of the murdered man.

As the two passed along the entry, they saw the glimmer of light through the crack of a door.

"Hold on!" said Bill, in a whisper; "this is Miss Jinnie's room. Hain't we better tell her all about the affair? She ain't gone to bed yet, 'cos the light's burning."

"Yes; I think that you had better tell her," Rennet replied.

Bill knocked on the panel, but, as the door was not latched, the motion forced it open. For the second time that night, the two men beheld a strange sight. In the center of the room, her face pale as the face of the dead, stood Jinnie. In her hand she clasped a Bowie-knife, the blade clotted with gore; the front of her dress was stained with blood, also.

For a moment, Jinnie looked at the two intruders with staring eyes, and they gazed at her with speechless horror.

Jinnie was the first to recover her speech.

"What is the matter?" she exclaimed.

"Tendl has been murdered!" Bill blurted out, never thinking what the effect of his words would be.

With a cry of horror, Jinnie dropped the Bowie-knife, and shrunk back in terror.

"Oh! that was the weapon that killed him!" she cried.

The same thought had occurred to both Bill and Rennet when they beheld the bloody weapon in the hand of the girl; but, Rennet's mind had not stopped there. Quick as the electric flash, he had guessed who had struck the blows that had robbed Tendl of his life, and the motive for the deed. A certain mysterious speech of the murdered man had come back to his mind, and that speech suggested a reason why Tendl's death would be a disadvantage to some one.

Rennet stepped forward and picked up the knife.

"I will take charge of this," he said; "it may lead to the discovery of the murderer."

"I thought that it was a joke—that some one was trying to frighten me, when I found the knife stained with blood on my table. I did not dare think that it was human blood; and see, it is all over my dress and hands!" With a convulsive sob, Jinnie sunk into a chair, completely unmoved.

Young Rennet cast a searching glance into her face, a peculiar look in his eyes.

"Bill, run for Judge Jones," he said; "we must look into this matter at once."

(To be continued—commenced in No. 264.)

A TRAMP entered a hotel in Wheatland, Cal., sat down at the breakfast-table, and speedily demolished a hearty meal. He then ordered another breakfast, and on its being placed before him, he suddenly covered his nasal organ with his hands and started for the door, apparently taken with bleeding at the nose.

He passed through the hotel and across the street to a pump, from whence he soon bolted down the track and made off.



I LOVE THEE YET.

BY S. M. HAIDER.

Yes, I love thee, dearly love thee.
Dearest image of my heart:
None on earth I prize above thee,
Oh, why must I then depart?
Other friends may greet me kindly,
Other forms as fair may be,
But my heart thy form shall cherish—
Thou art all the world to me.

Still I love thee, fondly love thee,
Though we may not meet again;
From thy side they may remove me,
Yet thine image will remain.
I must love thee, ever love thee,
Let the world say what it will,
And this heart shall ne'er reprove thee—
In my dreams I'll love thee still.

We are severed, and I'm lonely
Since we breathed our last farewell,
And I know I loved thee only,
More than mortal tongue can tell.
What, though I may never greet thee
On the changing shores of time,
I, at last, above will meet thee
In that brighter, better clime.

SLENDER FEET.

PARISIAN women are noted for their tiny feet, narrow ankles and arched instep. We learn every day that the small arched foot is a sign of nobility, a rule that admits of many exceptions. Generally, the aristocratic foot is fine, slender, nervous, delicate; the foot of the plebeian short and gross. The English have the flat foot; the Russians have enormous feet, as heavily attached as those of an elephant. For this reason, it is said, a Russian princess invented trailed robes. The American women are acknowledged to have beautiful feet. The fascinating forms and manners of the "ladies of Cadiz," the theme of old ballads, retain all their famous celebrity. Every one has heard of the dark, gleaming eyes; their pretty hands, "skilled" in the "nice conduct of the fan," their feet, dainty and fairy-like, "of which a glimpse is one of the last precious favors accorded to lovers' sighs and tears" and, more than all, their walk. The beauty of feet does not consist in their smallness so much as in their symmetry and grace of outline, and in their being short and extremely small. The feet of the Venus de Medicis excite the admiration of every one who looks at the beautiful statue. In the outline of their extremity they approach the elegant form of the ellipse, and are founded from the proportions of nature, that of six to one between the feet and the body, the standard of measurement adopted by the large body of the sculptors of antiquity. The natural projection of the second toe, which gives the foot its elliptic form, is arrested in its development, by compression of the foot or shoe, and thus its beauty is marred and its elastic tread impeded. There is always a similarity in the natural shape of the thumb and foot of the same person.

The Letter-

NEST-BUILDING.

BY EREN E. BEXFORD

A twitter of song in the branches—
A flutter of wings by the brook.
And I knew that the robins were building
Their nest in some leafy nook.

A whisper, so low and tender,
That it seemed a sound half-heard;
A rustle of leaves and blossoms,
As if by the breezes stirred;

A touch of hands, and an answer
From lips like a shy wild rose,
Where the wild bee seeks for honey
When its fragrant leaves unclose.

And I said: "Oh, busy robins,
As you chirp and twitter and sing,
And build your nest in the branches
In the long, sweet days of spring,

"Other nests than your small one
Are being built to-day:
A nest for two hearts to mate in,
In this wooing-time of May.

"Build on, oh, busy builders!
Young hearts must find a mate.
And their nests, like the nests of the robins,
Be built, soon or late."

Madge's Fate.

BY MARY REED CROWELL

A PAIR of brave, bright, thoughtful eyes, darkly-brown and dreamily tender; a low, graceful forehead, with bright golden hair brushed off it in a high fluffy puff; a small, serious mouth, with glowing red lips—the only vivid color in her face.

Lionel Hawhurst didn't know who she was, where she lived, or what her name was—this rare, radiant-faced girl he had met on the streets several times—always dressed in the same somber-gray luster walking-suit, always quiet, ladylike, unobtrusive, and as unconscious of his admiring notice as if there were no such fellow as Lionel Hawhurst in existence.

It haunted him—that face, that air, that carriage; and in a fortnight after he had first seen Madge Lester, this hitherto invulnerable young gentleman favored of the gods with an impressive, attractive appearance, refinement and culture, critical tastes and noble principles, and not a contemptible fortune in his own right, this very desirable gentleman whom mamma and daughters had vainly angled for season after season, was in a fair way of surrendering to an unknown girl.

Greenville was a bustling place in the season, and hundreds of appreciating tourists passed through, or stopped for a brief sojourn. Mr. Hawhurst among the latter class, whose stay was being indefinitely postponed by Madge Lester's face.

It was just at the height of the season, a cool, delicious summer day, and the lower balcony of the Greenville hotel was partly filled with the customary gentlemen loungers, whose chief happiness was divided between admiring the ladies passing by at intervals, and enjoying their daintily-perfumed cigars.

At one end of the piazza Lionel Hawhurst and Rob Trevelthen were joining in the common occupation, Hawhurst keeping up a running fire of pleasant comments as they smoked.

"How do you like Miss Mason, Rob?—she coming yonder in white. Isn't that old Tyler with her?"

Rob glanced critically at the lady in question, and both bowed as she passed with "old Tyler," the millionaire, who dangled in her train.

"Nice girl, I guess; can spend Tyler's money, I should think, judging by her gorgeous get-up. Who's that, Lion, across the street?"

"That—oh—Miss Rice, isn't it? you mean in gray silk?"

He had looked carelessly and answered carelessly.

"No—I know Lullie Rice when I see her. I mean that elegant-looking girl in black—yonder, just crossing—"

Hawhurst gave a low whistle.

"By Jove! it's she! Isn't she splendid, now? I'd give a thousand dollars to know that girl."

There was such unmistakable eagerness in his tone that Trevelthen looked incredulously at him.

"At last, Lion! Well, you couldn't lose your heart to a prettier. Don't you even know her name?"

"Not even her name, nor any one who does; but—"

He paused, and flushed slightly, a look of determination on his fair, handsome face.

"I want you to admire her, old fellow, because, if the Fates are good to me, they will give me that girl for my wife."

Madge Lester pushed her work further from her, that glorious warm afternoon, and leaned her head upon her tired hands to enjoy a little respite from the monotonous task that busied her from morning till night, day after day, the proceeds of which enabled her to attain to a comfortable livelihood, while there was a pitifully small margin left for the delightful vanities so natural and so necessary to a girl—a pretty girl of twenty.

She was an industrious, economical, cheerful, happy girl, with a heart saving for somebody who would be glorified by its wealth of womanly passion.

She had dreamed dreams—no living woman ever reached twenty without doing it—and now, very lately, there had been a tiny ripple of unrest on the smooth surface of her life—only the memory of a manly face and a manly figure that belonged to a perfect stranger.

She chided herself that she permitted herself to remember Lion Hawhurst's face and eyes, and would decide never to think of them again, with a bravery that was all very fine—while it lasted. Then, when she dressed in her simple toilet, to carry her work home to her employers, she would take extra care to look her best in the delicious hope of catching one little glimpse of him.

This afternoon she had just laid her work aside, for a brief rest, her dainty head leaning on her small, slender hands, when there came a low, timid rap on her door, followed by a frowled head and a crooked face.

"Please, is the missus in, Miss Madge?"

She looked just a little startled at the interruption.

"Oh, Teddy, is it you? No, mother isn't in. Is anything the matter? Won't I do?"

He scratched his head in dubious contemplation before he answered.

"It's mammy's hands is all burned, awful, and she's a-cryin' for the missus to come, come 'em, Cud you come?"

Madge arose instantly.

"Of course I'll go, at once. I can dress a burn as well as anybody. Run home, Teddy, and I'll be there almost as soon as you are."

She hurriedly took down a bottle of cosmo-

line and the bundle of linen rags always kept in the tiny medicine-chest, and hastened off on

her errand of mercy, little dreaming how plastic she was in the firm fingers of her Fate.

At the Irishwoman's cottage she found her services much needed. Mrs. O'Gorman was badly scalded on both hands, the baby crying with fright and heat, and the ironing table suffering for patient, skillful hands to finish three fine linen shirts.

"It's not the pain so much, Miss Madge," the grateful woman said, as Madge poured the cooling oil on the raw flesh. "I c'd stand the pain, and little Tom's howling, and the feyther c'd pick up his own supper when he comes home the avenin', but whin I see thim shirts all finished savin' three, and faithfully promised to the gentleman up at the hotel what's been so good and prompt-a-payin', it makes me very heart sick in me body."

Madge listened patiently, as she bandaged the flaming fingers.

"It is a misfortune, Mrs. O'Gorman, but surely the gentleman don't wear twelve shirts at once. Nine ought to satisfy him."

"It's comical ye are, Miss Madge, but that don't mend matters. It is goin' away Mither Hawhurst is, and must have 'em the night, scalded or not scalded."

She spoke with a quiet determination that touched Madge's generous heart.

"Then if Mr. Hawhurst is to have his shirts, I shall iron them. You cannot—it's preposterous to think of it."

Her face was flushed now—this sudden sense of duty had come home to her very strongly.

There never were but two ways for Madge to walk in, the right and the wrong—no compromise. Here, a task should, in honor, be performed; she could not afford to pay any one to do it, and, besides, she asked herself, almost

holy, why was she above an act of Christian kindness that required actual labor?

So, very decidedly, very skillfully, she went to work on Lionel Hawhurst's shirts, ironing them with a skill not equaled by Mrs. O'Gorman's practiced hand.

The afternoon was warm, the kitchen stifling, and she rolled up her sleeves, exposing her perfect, white arms; she pinned the front of her dress up and back, revealing her dainty feet; and, as far as vision as ever man would want to see, Madge stood there, flushed, pretty, excited, executing marvels on Lionel Hawhurst's immaculate shirt-fronts.

Until—a break, cheery voice startled her, just at the window, beside her.

"Well, Mrs. O'Gorman, are the shirts getting along?"

It was Lionel Hawhurst's voice, Lionel Hawhurst's face, blank with astonishment as he met her, face to face.

A crimson flush surged over her face, neck, arms; the next moment she was herself again, while Lion had recovered his wits and bowed courteously.

Mrs. O'Gorman came unconsciously to the rescue.

"Indade, and it's meself has Miss Madge to thank—"

But Madge cut her short.

"Don't mention it, please. It's all right now, and the gentleman can have his linen whenever 'ed can carry it up."

Surely a delicious flush was on her cheeks that was not all the result of the warm day or the hot irons; and she rolled down her sleeves with just a little trembling of her fingers, the while, Lionel watching her with ill-concealed eagerness.

"I feel deeply indebted to 'Miss Madge,' and if our mutual friend, Mrs. O'Gorman, will be kind enough to introduce me—"

"Indade and I will; so, Miss Madge, it's the gentleman at the hotel, Mr. Hawhurst I think 's the name."

Madge laughed and bowed.

"She has quite slighted me, I think. I am Madge Lester, at your service."

She dropped a saucy courtesy, and glanced at the snowy, glistening shirts.

"And I am Lionel Hawhurst, more proud and happy than I can express to make an acquaintance I have long ardently desired."

So it began. Is there the least need for saying a word more? Only this, to show that some men can be as romantic as women. In a certain drawer of a certain bureau in a certain house in a certain city, there lie in perpetual state three linen shirts, yellow with disuse, that Mrs. Hawhurst declares a shame to have wasted; but that Mr. Hawhurst declares shall repose in lavender and glory all their days, just as they left Madge Lester's hands that eventful day, one year before Madge Lester became his bride.

Victoria:

OR,

THE HEIRESS OF CASTLE CLIFFE.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,
AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "A WFUL MYSTERY," "THE RIVAL BROTHERS," ETC.

CHAPTER XIV—CONTINUED.

FLINGING away his cigar, Leicester strode around to the stables with his dog at his heels, and without waiting to change his dress, mounted his horse, and in five minutes after was dashing along in the direction of Lower Cliffe.

A horse in that small village would have created a sensation. Mr. Leicester never brought one there, and he did not now. Leaving it in the marshes in the care of a boy, he walked down the straggling path among the rocks, and halted at the door of Mr. Black's cottage.

"Come in!" called a sharp voice, in answer to his low knock; and obeying the peremptory order, he did walk in, and found himself face to face with old Judith.

"No one else was visible, and the old lady sat upon the broad hearth, propped up against the chimney-piece, with her knees drawn up to her chin, embraced by her clasped fingers, and blowing the smoke from a small, black pipe in her mouth, up the chimney."

"If you want our Barbara, young gentleman," said Judith, the moment her sharp eyes rested on him, "she's not here; she went out ten minutes ago, and I rather think, if you go through the park gates and walk smart, you'll catch up to her."

"Thank you. What a jolly old soul she is!" said Leicester, apostrophizing the old lady, as he turned out again and sprang with long strides over the road, through the open gates and along the sweeping path leading to the castle.

As he went on, he caught sight of a fluttering skirt glancing in and out through the trees, and in two minutes he was beside the tall, girlish figure, walking under the waving branches with a free, quick, elastic step.

Barbara, handsomer even in her plain, winter, crimson merino, trimmed with knots of black velvet and black lace; with no covering on the graceful head, but the shining braids of dark hair twisted, and knotted, and looped, as if there was no way of disposing of their exuberance, and with two or three rosy daises

gleaming through their darkness, looked up at him half-surprised, half-pleased.

"Why, Leicester, what in the world has brought you here?"

"My horse, part of the way—I walked the rest."

"Don't be absurd! When you went away half an hour ago I did not expect to see you again in Lower Cliffe to-day."

"Neither did I; but it seems I am going away, and it struck me I should like to say good-by."

Barbara started and paled slightly.

"Going away! Where?"

"To London."

"Oh, is that all? And how long are you going to stay?"

"Only a week or two. The Shirleys are coming back then, and I'm to return with them."

His grave tone startled her, and she looked at him searchingly.

"Is anything wrong? What are you looking so solemn about?"

"Barbara, I have two or three words to say. Come along till we get a seat."

They walked along, side by side, in silence, and turning into a by-path of yew and elm, they came in sight of the Nun's Grave, lying still and gloomy under their shade.

"This is just the place," said Leicester; "and here is a seat for you, Barbara, on this fallen tree."

But Barbara recoiled.

"Oh, not here! It is like a tomb—it is a tomb, this place!"

"Nonsense! What is the matter with you? What are you looking so pale for?"

"Nothing," said Barbara, recovering herself with a slight laugh; "only I've not been here for six years. Miss Shirley was with me then, and something startled us both, and made us afraid of the place."

"Ah!" his face darkened slightly at the name; "nothing will harm you while I am near. Here is a seat."

She seated herself on the old trunk of a tree, covered with moss, and he threw himself on the grave, with his arm on the black cross, and looked up in the beautiful, questioning face.

"Well, Barbara, do you know what I've come to say?"

"You've told me already. Good-by!" said Barbara, plucking the daisies, with a ruthless hand, from the grave, without looking up.

"And something else—that I love you, Barbara!"

She looked up at him and broke into a low, mocking laugh.

"Do you not believe me?" he asked, quietly.

"No!"

"Pleasant that, and why?"

"Because, sir!" she said, turning upon him so suddenly and fiercely that he started, "such words from you to me, spoken in earnest, would be an insult."

"An insult! Barbara, I don't know what you mean!"

"You don't. It is plain enough, nevertheless. You are the son of a baronet, and the heir of Cliffe; I am the daughter of a fisherman, promoted to that high estate from being a rope-dancer! Ask yourself, then, what such words from you to me can be but the deadliest of insults!"

"Barbara, you are mad, mad with pride. Stay and hear me out."

"I am not mad. I will not stay!" she cried, passionately, rising up. "I did think you were my friend, Mr. Cliffe; I did think you respected me a little. I never thought I could fall so low, in your eyes, as this!"

He sprang to his feet and caught both her hands as she was turning, with a passionate gesture, away, and, holding her firmly, looked in her eyes with a smile.

"Barbara, what are you thinking of? Are you crazy? I love you with all my heart, and some day, sooner or later, I will make you Lady Cliffe."

"You will make me nothing of the kind, sir. Release me, I command you, for I will not stay here to be mocked."

"It is my turn to be obstinate now. I will not let you go, and I am not mocking, but in most desperate earnest. Look at me, Barbara, and read the truth for yourself!"

She lifted her eyes to the handsome, smiling face bending over her, and read there truth and honor in glance and smile.

"Oh, Leicester!" she passionately cried. "Do not deceive me now, or my heart will break! I have had wild dreams of my own, but never before anything so wild as this. How can you say to me one so far beneath you; and, oh! what will Sir Roland and Lady Agnes say if it be true?"

"What they please! I am my own master, Barbara!"

"But Sir Roland may disinherit you."

"Let him. I have my own fortune, or rather my mother's; and the day I was of age I came into an income of some five thousand a year. So my proud little Barbara, if my worthy stepfather sees fit to disinherit me, you and I, I think, can manage to exist on that!"

"Oh, Leicester, can you mean all this?"

"Much more than this, Barbara. And now let me hear you say you love me!"

She lifted up to his face transformed and pale with intense joy; but, ere she could answer, a voice, solemn and sweet, rose from the grave under their feet:

"Barbara, beware!"

The words she would have uttered died out on Barbara's lips, and she started back with a suppressed shriek. Leicester, too, recoiled, and looked round him in wonder.

"What was that? Where did that voice come from, Barbara?"

"From the grave, I think," said Barbara, turning white.

Leicester looked at her, and seeing she was perfectly in earnest, broke out into a fit of boyish laughter.

"From the grave! Oh, what an idea. But, Barbara, I am waiting to hear whether or not I am to be an accepted lover."

Again the radiant look came over Barbara's face, again she turned to answer, and again arose the voice so solemn and so sad:

"Beware, Barbara!"

"This is some devilish trick!" exclaimed Leicester, passionately dashing off through the trees. "Some one is eavesdropping; and if I catch them I'll smash every bone in their body!"

Barbara, white as a marble statue, and nearly as cold, stood, looking down in horror at the Nun's Grave, until Leicester returned, flushed and heated, after his impetuous and fruitless search.

"I could see no one, but I am convinced some one has been listening, and hid, as I started in pursuit. And now, Barbara, in spite of men or demons, tell me that you love me!"

She held out both her hands.

"Oh, Leicester, I love you with all my heart!"

In her tone, in her look, there was something

so strangely solemn that he caught the infection, and raising the proffered hands to his lips, he said:

"My own Barbara! When I prove false to you, I pray God that I may die!"

"Amen!" said Barbara, with terrible earnestness, while from her dark eyes there shot for a moment a glance so fierce, that he half-dropped her hands in his surprise.

"But I shall never be false!" he said, recovering himself, and believing at the moment what he said was true; "true as the needle to the North Star shall I be to the lady I love. See! I shall be romantic for once, and make you it all a dream when I am gone. It has stood hundreds of years, perhaps, and may stand hundreds more, as a symbol of our deathless faith!"

Half-laughingly, half-earnestly, he took from his pocket a dainty pen-knife, and with one sharp, blue blade began carving their united initials on the bark of the hoary old elm, waving over the Nun's Grave. "L. S. C.," and underneath "B. B.," the whole encircled by a carved wreath; and as he finished, a great drop of rain fell on his glittering blade. He looked up, and saw that the whole sky had blackened.

"There is going to be a storm!" he exclaimed. "And how suddenly it has arisen! Come, Barbara, we will scarcely have time to reach the cottage before it breaks."

Barbara stopped for a moment to kiss the wetted initials; and then as the rain-drops began to fall thick and fast, she flew along the avenue, keeping up with his long man-strides, and in ten minutes reached the cottage, panting and out of breath. Old Judith stood in the doorway looking for her, so there was no chance of sentimental leave-taking; but looks often do wonderfully in such cases, and two pairs of eyes embraced at the cottage-door, and said, good-by.

The lightning leaped out like a two-edged sword as Barbara hastened to her room and sat down by the window. This window commanded a view of the sea and the marshes—the one black, and turbid, and moaning; the other, blurred and sodden with the rushing rain. And "Oh, he will be out in all this storm!" cried Barbara's heart, as she watched the rain and the lightning, and listened to the rumbling thunder, until the dark evening wore away, and was lost in the darker and stormier night. Still it rained, still it lightened and thundered, and the sea roared over the rocks, and still Barbara sat at the window, with her long hair streaming around her, and her soul full of a joy too intense for sleep.

With the night passed the storm, and up rose the sun, ushering in a new-born day to the restless world. Barbara was up as soon as the sun, and walking under the dripping boughs, along the drenched grass to the place of tryst. But the lightning had been before her; for there, across the Nun's Grave, lay the old elm—the emblem of their endless love—a blackened and blasted ruin.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SHADOW IN BLACK.

OLD JUDITH, when not sitting in the corner, smoking, had a habit of standing in the doorway, taking an observation of all that passed in Tower Cliffe. She stood there now, while the sun set behind the golden Sussex hills, with a black silk handkerchief knotted under her wrinkled chin, and her small, keen eyes shaded by her hand, peering over the sparkling sea. On the sands, in the crimson glow of the sunset, the fishermen who had been out all day were drawing up their boats on the shore, and among them Mr. Peter Black, with a tarpaulin hat on his head, and noisy fishy oilcloth jacket and trousers to match, was coming up the rocky road to supper.

Old Judith, on seeing him, turned hastily into the cottage, grumbling as she went, and began arranging the table. There was no one in the house but herself, and the room did not look particularly neat or inviting; for Barbara, lazy beauty, liked far better to dream over novels and wander through the beautiful grounds of the castle than to sweep floors and wash dishes, and old Judith was fonder of smoking and gossiping than paying any attention to these little household matters herself.

So, when Mr. Black entered his roof-tree, he found chairs and tables, and stools and pots, and kettles and pails, all higgledy-piggledy over the floor, as if these household gods had been dancing a fandango; and his appearance, perfuming the air with a most ancient and fish-like smell, did not at all improve matters.

Judith's sotto voce grumblings broke into an outcry the moment she found a listener.

"It's just gone seven by the sundial at the park-gates!" she cried, shrilly, "and that girl has been gone since sunrise, and never put her nose inside the door since."

"What girl—Barbara?" inquired Mr. Black, pulling a clasped knife out of his pocket, and falling to his supper of bread, and beef, and beer.

"To be sure it's Barbara—a lazy, undutiful, disrespectful minx as ever lived! There she goes, gadding about from one week's end to 'other, with her everlasting novels in her hand, or strumming on that trashy old guitar Lawyer Sweet was fool enough to give her, among the rocks. Her stockings may be full of holes, her dress may be torn to tatters, the house may be dirty enough to plant cabbage in, and I may scold till all is blue, and she don't care a straw for one of 'em, but gives snappish answers, and goes on twice as bad as before!"

"Can't you talk in the house, mother?" gruffly inquired Mr. Black, with his mouth full, as the old woman's voice rose in her anger to a perfect squeal. "You needn't make the village think you're being murdered about it."

"Needn't I?" said Judith, her voice rising an octave higher. "I might be murdered, and she go to old Nick, where she is going as fast as she can, for all you care. But I tell you what it is, Peter Black, if you're a fool, I'm not; and I won't see my granddaughter going to perdition without raising my voice against it, and so I tell you!"

Peter Black laid down the pewter-pot he was raising to his lips, and turned to his tender mother with an inquiring howl:

"What do you mean, you old screech-owl, flying at a man like the devil, the moment he sets his foot inside the door? Has Barbara struck you, or anybody else, that you're raving mad like this? Lord knows," said Mr. Black, resuming his supper, "if she let a little of that spare breath out of you I shouldn't be sorry."

"There'll be a little spare breath let out of somebody afore long!" screeched the old lady, clawing the air viciously with her skinny fingers, "and it won't be me. I told you before, and I tell you again, that girl's going to old Nick as fast as she can, and perhaps when you see her there, and it's too late, you'll begin to think about it. Her pride, and her bad temper, and the airs she gave herself about her red

cheeks, and her dark eyes, and her long hair, and the learning she's managed to get, weren't bad enough, but now she's fell in with that besotted, pale-faced, high and mighty popinjay from foreign parts, and they're together morning, noon, and night. And now," reiterated old Judith, turning still more fiercely on her scowling son, "what good is likely to come of a fisherman's daughter and a baronet's son and heir being together for everlastin'—what good I ask you yourself?"

Mr. Peter Black laid down his knife, opened his eyes, and pricked up his ears.

"Hay!" he inquired. "What the demon are you driving at now, mother?"

"Do you know Sir Roland Cliffe, of Cliffe-wood? Answer me that."

"To be sure I do."

"And do you know that fine gentleman with all the grand airs, Mr. Leicester Cliffe, his stepson?"

"What's the old woman raving about?" exclaimed Mr. Black, with an impatient appeal to the elements. "I've seen Mr. Leicester Cliffe, and that's all I know about him, or want to. What the deuce has he to do with it?"

"Oh, nothing, of course. Ever since he came here last May day, two weeks gone, he and your daughter have been thicker than pickpockets—that's all. Only a trifle, you know—not worth worrying about."

"Well?" said Mr. Black, fixing his eyes on her with a powerful expression.

And the old woman ran on with fierce volubility:

"No longer ago than last night, they came home together at dark; and she was off and away this morning at daybreak, to meet him again, of course. It's been the same thing ever since May-day; and she's so savage nobody dare say a word to her; and you're as thick-headed as a mule, and couldn't see water if you went to the sea-side! Everybody else sees it, and she's the town's talk by this time. Mr. Sweet sees it; and by the same token, she treats Mr. Sweet as if he were the dirt under her feet. You know very well he wants her to marry him—him that might have the pick of the parish—and she holds her head up in the air, and sneers at him for his pains, the ungrateful hussy."

"Look here, mother!" said Mr. Black, turning round, with the blue blade of the knife gleaming in his hand, and a horrible light shining in his eyes, "I know what's in the wind now, and all that you're afraid of, so just listen! I'm proud of my girl; she's handsome and high-stepping, and holds her head above everybody far and near, and I'm proud of her for it; I'm fond of her, too, though I mayn't show it; and if there's any thing in this cursed world I care for, it's her; but I would rather see her dead and buried—I would rather see her the miserable cast-off wretch you are thinking of—than the rich wife of that black-hearted, double-dyed hypocrite, liar and scoundrel, Sweet. I would, by—"

Mr. Black, with an awful oath, plunging his knife into the lump of cold beef, as if it were the boiled heart of the snake, Mr. Sweet.

With the last imprecation, yet on his lips, a clear, girlish voice was heard without, singing the good old English tune of "Money Musk," and the door suddenly opened, and Barbara, who never sung of late, stood, with the tune on her lips, before them. The long, dark hair, unbound and disheveled by the strong sea-breeze, floated in most becoming disorder over her shoulders; her cheeks

waves. The fishing-boats went dancing in and out in the shining path it made across the waters; and Barbara, with her long hair fluttering behind her in the wind, watched them with her cold, beautiful eyes, and heeded the man beside her no more than the rock against which she leaned.

He looked at her for a moment, and then shrugged his shoulders, with a slight smile. "Leicester Cliffe left town this morning for London, did he not?" he asked, at length, abruptly.

"I believe so," said Barbara, looking at him with a steady gaze.

"Is that the cause of your gloom and silence to-night?"

Barbara turned impetuously round, with a dangerous fire in her great dark eyes.

"Mr. Sweet, take care what you are saying. You will oblige me exceedingly by going about your own affairs, whatever they may be, and leaving me alone. I didn't ask your company here, and I don't want it!"

Mr. Sweet smiled good-naturedly.

"But when I want you so much, Miss Barbara, what does a little reluctance on your part signify? Two weeks ago, on the morning of May-day—you remember May-day—I did myself the honor to ask you for this fair hand."

"And received No for an answer. I hope you remember that also, Mr. Sweet."

"Distinctly, Miss Barbara; yet in two weeks your mind may have changed; and if so, here I to-night renew the offer."

"You are very kind; but I have only the trouble of saying No over again."

"Barbara, stop and think. I love you. I am a rich man—richer than most people imagine—and I think, without flattering myself, there are few girls in Clifton who would not hesitate about refusing me. Barbara, pause before you throw away so good an offer."

"There is no need. I suppose I ought to feel honored by your preference; but I don't in the least, and that is the truth. You may make any of the Clifton ladies happy by so brilliant an offer, if you choose; and I promise to go to her wedding, if she asks me, without feeling the least jealousy at her good fortune."

"You are sarcastic, and yet I think there are some feelings—gratitude, for instance—that should make you treat me and my offer with at least decent respect."

"Gratitude?" said Barbara, fixing her large dark eyes with a strong glance on his face. "I don't owe you anything, Mr. Sweet. No, don't interrupt me, if you please. I know what you would say, that I owe all the home I have known for the last two years to you and that you rescued me from a life of hardship, and perhaps degradation. Well, I've been told that so often by you, that I have ceased to think it a favor; and as from the first it was your own pleasure to do so, without my will or request, I consider I'm not indebted to you the value of a farthing. As to education and all that, you know as well as I do, that Colonel Cliffe sent me to the Town Academy, and provided me with everything while there. So, Mr. Sweet, don't talk of gratitude any more, if you and I are to be friends."

While she spoke, in a voice clear and low, with a ringing note of command and a warning fire in her eye, Mr. Sweet watched her with the same quiet, provoking smile. In her beauty and in her pride she towered above him, and flung back his gifts like stones, in his face.

"And when is it to be?" he asked, when she ceased.

"What?" she asked, looking at him with a steady gaze.

"Your marriage with the heir of Sir Roland Cliffe."

Even in the moonlight, he saw the scarlet rush that dyed her face and neck, and the short, half-smiled breath.

"This is your revenge!" she said, calmly, and waving him away, with the air of an outraged queen; "but go—go, and never speak to me again."

"Not even when you are Lady Cliffe?"

"Go!" she said, fiercely, and stamping her foot. "Go, or I shall make you!"

"Only one moment. When there are two moons in yonder sky; when you can dip all the water in the sea before us with a teaspoon; when 'Barnum wood will come to Dunsmine'; then—then Leicester Cliffe will marry Barbara Black! I have said you will be my wife; and, sooner or later, that time will come. Meantime, proud and pretty Barbara, good-night!"

Taking off his hat, he bowed low, and with the smile still on his lips, walked away in the moonlight—not only smiling, but singing, and Barbara distinctly heard the words:

"So long as he's constant,
So long I'll prove true;
And then if he changes,
Why, so can I, too."

Barbara sunk down on the rock and covered her face with her hands, outraged, ashamed, indignant; and yet, in the midst of all, with a sharp, keen pain aching in her heart. She had been so happy all that day—loved, loving, and trusting—thinking herself standing on a rock, and finding it crumbling to dust and ashes. Oh, why had they not let her alone! Why had they not let her hope and be happy! If Leicester proved false, she felt as though she should die; and half-hating herself for believing for a moment he could change, she sprung up and darted off with a fleet, light step toward the still open park-gates—determined to visit, once more, the trying-place, and reassure herself there that their mutual love was not all an illusion. She never thought of the ghostly voice in her excitement, as she walked up the moonlit avenue, and down the gloomy lane, toward the fallen elm. The pale moon's rays came glancing faintly through the slanting leaves; and kneeling down beside it, she saw the united initials his hand had carved, and the girl clasped her hands in renewed hope and joy.

"He is false!" said a low, solemn voice from the grave on which she knelt; and, starting up with a suppressed shriek, Barbara found herself face to face with an awful vision.

A nun, supernaturally tall, all in black and white, stood directly opposite, with the grave and the fallen elm between them. Without noise or movement, it was before her; how, or from whence it came, impossible to tell; its tall head seeming in the shadowy moonlight to reach nearly to the tree-tops, in a long, straight nun's dress, a black nun's veil, a white band over the forehead, and another over the throat and breast. The moon's rays fell distinctly on the face of deadly whiteness, and with two stony eyes shining menacingly under bent, spellbound, speechless. The figure raised its shrouded arm, and pointing at her with one flickering finger, the voice again rose from the grave, for the white lips of the specter moved not.

"Thrice have you been warned, and thrice have you spurned the warning! Your good angel weeps, and the doom is gathering thick and dark overhead! Once more, Barbara, beware!"

Still Barbara stood mute, white almost as the specter, with supernatural terror. With shrouded arm and flickering finger still pointing toward her, the ghostly nun gazed at her, while the sad, solemn voice rose again from the grave.

"You love, and think you are beloved in return, oh, rash, infatuated child! Spurn every thought of him as you would a deadly viper; for there is ruin, there is misery, there is death in his love!"

"Be it so, then!" cried Barbara, wildly, finding voice in a sort of frantic desperation; "better death with him than life with an other!"

"Barbara, be warned, for your doom is at hand!" said the unseen voice. And as it spoke, the moon was lost in shadow, a dark cloud shrouded the gloomy grave and the black shape. There was a quick and angry rush as it vanished among the trees; and the whole night seemed to blacken as it passed.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 269.)

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(To be continued—commenced in No. 269.)

Tiger Dick: OR, THE CASHIER'S CRIME.

A TALE OF MAN'S HATE AND WOMAN'S FAITH.
BY PHILIP S. WARNE.

CHAPTER VIII.
THE TIGER UNDISMAYED.

TIGER DICK sat in his cell, with a look in which was a curious blending of satisfaction and vexation.

"It's deuced hard luck to be cooped up in this handbox," he said, with a half-frown, glancing around the narrow confines of the room. "Well, they can't bring anything against me but resisting arrest, if I can only stop the mouth of Freddy's pa. Gads! it was lucky I put the keys into the satchel along with the greenbacks, or they would have found them when they searched me. Shadow Jim must have grabbed up the satchel, when he lit out. He's a trump, he is. He saw there was no use of sticking to me any longer—he'd only get bagged along with me, if he did—and so he made off with the plunder, which the same was the only evidence of our indebtedness to Messrs. Carrington & Powell. If I hadn't trusted the yellow boys—Dick meant the coin—"to McFarland, we would have been in a box. He would have had to leave one or the other, which would have been equally bad. By the way, I suppose Mac is just rogue enough to run away with the skids, if he didn't know that I'd hunt him through purgatory and back but I'd put a sky-light into his carcass for it."

"Well, well, one day we're up and the next we're down. If the valiant Duff will only put in an appearance, we'll see what can be done toward effecting my release from this snug little seven-by-nine."

Jimmy Duff was Tiger Dick's partner. "His end of the shop" was the "whisky-slinging," while the Tiger "manipulated the pasteboards." He was a man with bristling black hair and bristling black beard. When he frowned, his beetling black brows bristled; and when he compressed his lips, the hairs of his short-cropped mustache rose successively, like the quills of an angry hedgehog. The corporeal man had imbibed, or in some way acquired, the symmetrical proportions of his whisky-barrels; and the muscular gurgles of the "cratur" lingered in his voice.

"Arrah! Dick, me jewel, an' what are ye doin' here, in this lousy hole?" was his salutation, when ushered by the warden into the presence of the Tiger.

"Sit down, Jimmy," said Tiger Dick, making room on the edge of his bed. "It isn't a very long story; but then a man of your proportions isn't expected to stand long on his feet."

"Whisht! me b'y," said Duff, letting himself down upon the bed and mysteriously drawing a flask from his pocket. "It's meself that's brought ye a toothful av potheen, sure, to liven ye up a bit. Kape a stout heart, an' we'll jerk ye out of this lousy droppin' a hot pratle. Meself's the b'y that'd like to knock the face off the murd'rin' spalpeens that clapped hands on you last night, bad cess to them, so I would!"

Tiger Dick drank off the liquor, and smacking his lips, said:

"Jimmy, I'll remember you on the judgment-day, if I see it going hard with you, and I have a drop of consolation in my canteen. But now to business. Have you seen anything of Shadow Jim?"

"Nather hide nor hair of 'im, the gosssoon."

"Well, keep your eyes peeled and get some keys that he has, if you can. He is lying low, because the cops that nabbed me got their peepers on him, too. Stow him away some where, if he comes to you; and tell McFarland and O'Toole to keep shady until we find out whether they are suspected, or not."

"Meself's yer mutton for that job, Dick, darlint," said Duff, with enthusiasm.

"And, Jimmy, there's another bit of business that I want you to do for me."

"Anything in the worruld, Dick, alanna."

"You know where Powell, the banker, hangs out?"

"Faith, an' I do that same."

"Well, some gents, wanting their deposits last night, drew them out, without waiting for the teller."

"The murthe'fin' divils!" exclaimed Duff, with a wink that buried his sharp little eye beneath his bristling black brow and bristling black beard.

"However, the cashier was present."

"Bad luck to him, for a thafe of the worruld!"

"And they persuaded him to unlock the strong-box and hand over the money; without stopping to count it, however, as they were somewhat pressed for time."

"Och, acushla madree! was there iver such a b'y! Dick, avourneen, why did ye niver go to Congress? Sure, there's not your equal on binn or bar."

"Well, old pard," said Tiger Dick, passing over the compliment of the other, "I want you to go to that bank, without delay, as it is now nearly banking hours."

"Sure, Dick, darlint," interrupted Duff, "I would have come to you by the break of morn, but I'm just from a bit of a wake at Billy Maymourn's the night, and word didn't reach me till this half an hour gone."

"Well, go to the bank, and you will doubtless find them in hot water by this time. But tell Mr. Powell, for the sake of his family pride and for the honor of his name, not to spring his trap until he finds what kind of game he has in it. Mind you, for the sake of his family pride and for the honor of his name. If he asks what that means, tell him that you know nothing about it; but that you are sent by Tiger Dick, who told you to advise him to keep the whole matter dark, until he has asked his cashier and janitor if they didn't hear a key turn in the lock, after the burglars went out."

"A key, is it?" asked Duff, with awakened curiosity, remembering that he was to get some keys from Shadow Jim.

"Never fear of me, Dick. Is that all?"

"That's all. Only try to get to the bank before the thing is noised abroad."

Meanwhile, the messenger-boy had come to the bank with the morning mail. At the door he met another clerk, and together they entered the bank. What was their surprise at seeing the cashier and janitor lying bound and gagged on the bed of the latter.

"Run for a doctor, Tommy," cried the elder clerk, fearing that the men might be otherwise injured. Then he set about cutting the cords that bound them, with his knife.

The messenger-boy ran to the door, and seeing a doctor riding by, called to him excitedly.

"What is the matter, my little fellow?" asked the physician, driving up to the curbstone, and leaping out.

"Oh, sir, Mr. Beaumont and Dawson are tied up in Dawson's bed, and I don't know what else is the matter with them."

The boy's excited words attracted several passers-by, and they, with the doctor, hurried into the bank.

Cecil and Dawson were somewhat stiff and sore from the ligatures and gags, but otherwise uninjured. The cashier briefly stated what had occurred.

"And, by Jove, sirs!" cried Dawson, in addition, "the scamps let themselves out with a key! How the devil did they get in—that's what I'd like to know."

Examination was made, and doors and windows gave no appearance of having been tampered with.

"False keys," was the verdict volunteered by one of the spectators.

At this point a carriage drove up and Mr. Powell and May entered.

"What is the matter, Mr. Beaumont?" asked the banker, surprised at the unusual appearance of things.

"Mr. Powell, I am sorry to have to announce that the bank has been the scene of a very daring robbery."

Cecil then told Mr. Powell in a few words what had happened.

"Well, this is no time for inaction," said the banker, briskly. "Has anything been done to notify the proper authorities?"

"It is not five minutes since myself and Dawson were released from our uncomfortable position."

"Dawson, clear the bank and secure the door. Mr. Farrell, oblige me by taking the carriage and going for Mr. Carrington. Mr. Worth, I guess I shall have to depend upon you to fetch the chief of police and his most experienced detective. Mr. Beaumont, if you will step into my private room, we will go over this thing a little more in detail; then we will look into our losses."

Mr. Powell gave his directions in a quiet, yet rapid voice, and stepped to his desk.

"Cecil, are you hurt?" May found time to ask, with an anxious look.

"Not at all," he replied, pressing her hand reassuringly.

Mr. Powell made himself master of all the facts, listening to the stories of both Cecil and Dawson. Subsequent investigation proved that the bank had suffered to the amount of something over sixty thousand dollars. A placard was made out, announcing the fact of the robbery, and stating, over the signature of the president and cashier, that the bank would be able to resume business in a few days.

Dawson took this to post it on the door. He was accosted by a man with bristling black hair and bristling black beard, who stepped out of the crowd, and regarded him with sharp black eyes that gleamed shrewdly from beneath bristling black brows, while he was addressing him in a voice that had the gurgle of "potheen" in it.

"Faith, an' I'd like to see Mr. Powell, the banker, if he's widin'."

"Can't see anybody just now. He's busy," said Dawson, shortly.

Judging from the appearance of the applicant, he supposed him a creditor to the amount of two shillings and sixpence, more or less, anxious to secure his deposit.

"But this is particular," persisted the man. "Faith, it's more for his benefit than me own that I'm seeking him."

"Can't see anybody," insisted the janitor. "Arrah, thin!" exclaimed the man, somewhat impatiently, "will ye take me 'aird to him?"

"Yes, I'll take your card; but it won't do no good."

The man took a greasy card from his pocket, wrote a few words on it in lead pencil, and handed it to the janitor.

"Begorra, he'll be only too glad to see me," he said, confidently.

Dawson took the card disdainfully, and carried it to Mr. Powell.

"This is sent you, sir, by a hard-looking customer that insists on seeing you, and I can't get rid of him no way."

The banker glanced at the card, and read:

"James Duff, who can throw some light on the affair of last night."

"What sort of a person is he, Dawson?" asked the banker.

"A clodhopper, sir, that looks as if he were not long out of jail," answered Dawson, in great disgust.

The banker smiled at the description, thought a moment, and then said:

"Fetch him in, anyway."

Jimmy Duff was ushered in, himself radiant, the janitor crestfallen.

"Have a chair, Mr. Duff," said the banker, eying him curiously. "Well, sir, what can you tell us of last night's business?"

"Perhaps I might see you alone, now," said Mr. Duff, in an insinuating tone, glancing at May and Cecil, who were the only remaining occupants of the room.

"It is only my daughter and cashier, sir. Pray proceed without reserve."

"But, yer honor, my business concerns just yerself alone, an' is pertic'lar loike."

"You need have no hesitancy about speaking in the presence of these people. My cashier is, of course, in my confidence; and the lady, being my daughter, need not interfere with any communication you wish to make."

May withdrew to a window. Cecil sat expectant and anxious, though he strove to prevent his face from betraying the fact.

Duff scratched his head, at a loss how to make the banker appreciate the situation without stating the case before the cashier. Presently he had an idea—he would throw out a hint.

"You must know, sir, I'm come from Tiger Dick. He would have called upon you in person, if he mind, but he's confined to the house. The fact is, in plain English, the cops has taken him to board," said Mr. Duff, with a grin.

"Tha-ur," he added, mentally, "he'll twig that, and send this spalpeen of a cashier off on his ear."

But Mr. Powell evidently did not understand Mr. Duff's "plain English," for he turned to Cecil in perplexity. The cashier had changed color at Duff's announcement; but he rallied, and summoning a smile to his face, said:

"I think he means that the man is confined in jail."

"That's it, me jewel," assented Mr. Duff. "Sure he's in dirty wather up to his eyes in it."

"And who is this Tiger Dick?" asked the banker.

"Faith, he's my pardner, yer honor. We kape a little shebang on River street, just beyond the boat landing, wha-ur we dale out the most iligant liquors that's dhurank in the Mississippi valley. More than that, we give the b'ys amusement playing wid the tiger. I sling the whisky, d'ye mind, while Tiger Dick manipulates the pasteboards."

Mr. Powell turned to Cecil with a sudden look of inquiry. Cecil understood him and silently bowed the banker's face.

"Well, sir, proceed. What of this Tiger Dick?" he asked, quietly.

Duff looked surprised and uneasy. "The banker did not yet see the drift of his words."

"He was arrested last night, yer honor," he said, pointedly.

"Ah! Go on," said Mr. Powell, with awakening interest.

"And he sends a message, sir, to you, that concerns only yerself."

"Very well; deliver it," said the banker, a little impatiently.

Jimmy Duff gave up in despair. He slid forward on his chair, with his hands on his knees. His hair bristled, and his black eyes snapped. He compressed his lips, until each particular hair of his mustache seemed endowed with individual erectile power, and his voice gurgled defiance, as he said:

"Faith, yer honor, he said that I was to tell ye: for the sake of yer family pride and for the honor of yer name, kape this whole affair dark, until ye see as yer cashier and janitor did they he-ur a key turn in the lock, when the burglars wint out o' the do-ur."

"Why, the man must be crazy!" cried Mr. Powell, in bewilderment. "Mr. Beaumont, what do you make of this rigmorole?"

"Sir, am as much at a loss as yourself," replied the cashier.

"Thim's his worruds," persisted Duff. "As ye valley yer family pride an' the honor of yer name, don't spring yer thrup until ye see what kind of game ye're going to catch."

"Father, what does he mean?" whispered May, coming to the back of her father's chair, and laying her trembling hand on his shoulder.

"He keeps repeating that—the honor of your name and 'your family pride.' What can he mean?"

"Will you repeat the message just as it was sent?" asked the banker, now pale, and now red.

"For the sake of yer family pride, and for the honor of yer name, don't spring yer thrup until ye see what kind of game ye're going to catch. Kape this whole affair dark, until ye see as yer cashier and janitor did they he-ur a key turn in the lock, when the burglars wint out o' the do-ur," repeated Duff, slowly and distinctly.

"Mr. Beaumont, oblige me by calling Dawson."

The banker now spoke in a strangely constrained tone of voice. "On the appearance of the banker, he said:

"Dawson, repeat your story, after the burglars secured the money."

"Why, sir, all there was to it is, that they finished binding Mr. Beaumont, and threw him onto the bed, and went off."

"Through the door?"

"Yes, sir; and turned the key after them. Wherever they got it from I don't know."

"Put your latch-key on the table, please."

Dawson complied in bewilderment, glancing suspiciously at Jimmy Duff, whose mustache displayed unusual activity, and whose eyes twinkled with malicious triumph.

Suddenly Mr. Powell bethought him that there was no use in letting the enemy see that the attack was weakened by this first shot.

"Mr. Duff," he said, referring to the card, "your address?"

"149 River street."

"And the prisoner?"

"Belokie will remain so, yer honor, for a few days, at last, and can be found at the jail, cell twenty-seven, second floor."

"Thank you. Was there any thing more?"

"Not-thing mo-ur, yer honor," said Duff, rising. And with an awkward bow, in which every hair on his bristling face and head participated on its own account, he withdrew.

"Dawson, send all the clerks in here," said the banker.

They filed in, and each, at Mr. Powell's direction, left his latch-key on the desk. Cecil Beaumont added his to the rest.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Powell to his bewildered subordinates, "you will oblige me by not communicating outside what has taken place since you entered the bank."

He bowed to intimate their dismissal, and then he drew a deep breath.

"There are still Messrs. Farrell and Worth," said the banker, meditatively. He did not mention Fred. Was the avoidance of his name intentional?"

CHAPTER IX.
ANOTHER VIEW OF THE CASE.

"MR. BEAUMONT," said the banker, with a far-away look in his eyes, "set the clerks to work straightening up matters, and tabulate our condition as soon as possible. Of course, the regular routine of business will go forward without interruption, except only passing money over the counter."

Cecil went out to get the force to work. Mr. Powell left his head laid upon his arms and gave himself up to painful meditation. May wept silently apart.

The return of the carriage aroused the banker, and a moment afterward his father-in-law entered.

"Well, John, what is the trouble?" he asked, seating himself.

Mr. Powell stated the facts of the robbery, and the manner in which the bank had been attacked.

"Are in the neighborhood of sixty thousand?"

"Hm! What has been done about it?"

"I have placarded our misfortune, with the assurance of resumption of business in a few days; set Mr. Beaumont to work to ascertain our exact condition; and sent for the chief of police."

"The most important step of the three," replied Mr. Carrington, in a business-like tone. "Here he is now."

The door opened, giving admittance to the aldermanic chief of police and a wiry little detective. Mr. Carrington drew up a chair, nodding to the guardian of the city, ready for business. Mr. Powell changed color, and greeted them in unmistakable embarrassment.

"My daughter," he said, in an undertone, to May, "this is no place for you. Return home, and if you find Frederick, send him to me immediately."

Pale with anxiety and vague terror, May grasped her father's hand and gazed into his face beseechingly. He pressed her hand lovingly and said:

"Go, my child, and may God bless you."

May withdrew, and her father turned to the officers of the law, whom his own orders had summoned. It was with downcast eyes and a hesitation that called a look of surprise to every face in the room.

"Well, Mr. Powell, you sent for me?" said the chief of police.

"I did, sir," replied the banker, in a constrained voice; "but circumstances have intervened which have decided me to consult with Mr. Carrington, before laying the matter before you."

"Indeed, sir!" said the chief of police, in surprise.

"Ah!" said the detective, under his breath, and the pupils of his eyes contracted with shrewd speculation. He was adding Mr. Powell's evident embarrassment to his words, and trying to deduce a rational conclusion.

"What do you say?" said Mr. Carrington in amazement. "What has intervened to prevent our putting the matter immediately into the hands of the proper authorities?"

Directness was Mr. Carrington's characteristic, and he could conceive of no possible reason for delay.

"Mr. Beaumont," he said, "please send for the officers again. It is no fool's errand we have for them this time, I think."

CHAPTER X.

THE CROWNING MOVE

When Cecil Beaumont left the private room of the banker, he found the clerks perched up on desks, tables and high stools, discussing the all-absorbing topic. The reception of the bustling Duff and his smiling exit, followed by the demand for their latch-keys, caused a feeling of uneasiness, as indicating (viewed in connection with Dawson's story of the turning of a key in the lock) that suspicion in some way rested upon one of their number. But the cashier broke in upon their speculations.

"Come, gentlemen," he said, "this unfortunate affair need not interfere with our regular office-work. Mr. Carlisle—to the bookkeeper—"you will please figure up our exact condition, and Mr. Farrell—the teller—"will assist you when he returns."

Cecil then went to his desk, and began looking over the mail. Mr. Carrington and the teller soon entered, the former passing immediately into the banker's private room. Mr. Farrell, at the request of the cashier, left his latch-key on the latter's desk. Every eye saw it, and every breast drew a breath of relief. The interest and suspense now centered upon Mr. Worth.

He soon entered with the officers of the law, and, like the rest, gave up his key. Then every one returned to work with a feeling of security. Fred Powell had not appeared; but no one thought of him in that connection.

The departure of May Powell had little interest in for any one but Charley Brewster, who leaped down from his high stool and accompanied her to the carriage. His keen eyes soon detected through her veil that she had been weeping, and a look of sympathy came into his eyes, that touched the young girl's heart. As he assisted her into the carriage, she gave him a little, grateful squeeze, that went straight to his heart in a warm glow.

"I wonder why she was weeping?" he mused, as he re-entered the bank. "It can't be the money. They will not feel that."

And he sat down to his desk with a puzzled expression in his eyes.

The chief of police and his satellite almost immediately followed May; but nothing could be gathered from their impassable faces, though every one wondered at their brief stay.

Suddenly a red flush passed over the cashier's face, and went away, leaving him pale. He arose with a piece of paper in his hand, and passed into his bed-chamber.

Once hid from other eyes, Cecil Beaumont laid the draft on the marble-top dressing-table, and gazed at it intently.

"Step the third!" he said, in a deliberate tone. "First, his confidence is shaken by intemperance and gambling. Next he is made to suspect his complicity in robbery. A big stride, certainly; but gamblers get desperate, and he would not be the first son who has betrayed his father, to procure the means to continue in his course of dissipation. And then, why did he demand the latch-keys and dismiss the police? It can bear but one interpretation."

"Well, this is a most excellent preparation for this next stroke. But seemingly-perfect plans have, sometimes, fallen through at the very moment of success. I must be prepared. I would much rather Harold Carrington were not present. But delay is hazardous. I must strike while the iron is hot."

He drew a pistol from his pocket, and examined its loading with a hand that trembled slightly.

"I am playing for high stakes," he muttered. "I will win all, or lose all!"

Then tossing off two or three glasses of wine in succession, he took the draft and went to the banker's private room.

Cecil Beaumont started, and the blood rushed back on his heart, as Mr. Powell met him in the doorway, and said:

"Mr. Beaumont, please send for the officers again. It is no fool's errand we have for them this time, I think."

He spoke in a brisk, business-like tone, and the shadow of pain had left his brow. "What kind of a firm of affairs is this?" asked Cecil of himself. "He cannot mean to give up his son."

Then, glancing at Mr. Carrington, and noting his undisturbed appearance, he concluded that the elder gentleman had in some way freed the mind of the other of his apprehensions.

Cecil Beaumont saw the whole fabric of his machinations tottering about his ears. It was a supreme moment; but he rose with the emergency. Fighting off the chill of despair that seized him, he summoned to his face a look of sympathetic grief, and kept on into the room, closing the door after him.

Mr. Powell stepped back, with a look of surprise at the manner of his cashier, and a glance at the draft he held in his hand. Somehow, the latter sent a chill to his heart.

"Wait a moment, Mr. Powell," said Cecil. "I have just come across a matter which I believe should be submitted to you, before any further steps are taken."

"What more delays?" demanded Mr. Carrington, with a frown, thumping his cane impatiently on the floor.

"It seems to me unavoidable, sir," replied Cecil, deferentially.

Then, turning to Mr. Powell, he went on, with a great show of embarrassment:

"It is a very delicate matter, Mr. Powell. If you would allow me to first communicate with you alone—"

He hesitated, and looked at the banker compassionately.

"No," said Mr. Powell, sinking into a chair from very weakness, the old stoop coming into his shoulders, and the old tremulousness to his frame.

"I have nothing apart from Mr. Carrington. Make known what you wish to state."

"It was to save you pain, sir," replied Cecil, gently, still hesitating.

"Another big-oh!" cried Mr. Carrington, testily. He hated bother and circumlocution.

"One would think we were debating the propriety of negotiating a loan, instead of trying to set in motion the machinery necessary to recover what has been forcibly taken from us."

"State your case, Mr. Beaumont, and be as brief as possible," said Mr. Powell, in a sinking tone.

Mr. Beaumont began by saying:

"Here are the keys of Farrell and Worth."

"Confound the keys!" muttered Mr. Carrington, with his chin resting on his hands, while they were clasped over the head of his cane.

But as they clinked among the rest, the sound fell upon Mr. Powell's heart like a knell.

"Mr. Powell," began the cashier, "being in your confidence as much as I have been, and having seen and heard all that has transpired here within the last twenty-four hours, my

thoughts are unavoidably urged in one direction. I do not offer what I am about to lay before you as confirmation of the painful impressions I have received—impressions which, if true, only yourself can deprecate more than I do—but they are associated through their connection with the same person, and may throw light one upon the other.

This introduction only nettled Mr. Carrington.

"Mr. Beaumont," he said, "can you give us, in a few words, the bearing of all this?"

But every sentence fell upon Mr. Powell like the rendering of judgment, and he sat mute.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 271.)

RED ROB.

The Boy Road-Agent.

BY OLL COOMES.

AUTHOR OF "DAKOTA DAN," "BOWIE-KNIFE BEN," "OLD HURRICANE," "HAWKEYE HARRY," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TRAILING A CENTAUR.

DAKOTA DAN put Humility on the track of the Centaur and moved rapidly away in pursuit. The creature had followed down the del los Pinos to its junction with the San Juan, when it turned and continued on down the latter stream.

Might had already blended mountain and plain in chaotic gloom. The sky was overcast with black, scudding clouds. The heavens were one quivering sheet of vivid flame, rendered more terrible in its awful grandeur by the constant roll of thunder afar off.

Such storms, as that threatened, were not of infrequent occurrence in this volcanic latitude, though now and then a fearful wind-storm swept over the mountains and plains of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. Dakota Dan had become familiar with the country and its climatic freaks, and knew exactly what to depend upon. On the night in question he prophesied a heavy rain along the eastern range of mountains, but he was satisfied that it would not extend as far westward as the del los Pinos valley; that is, that there would be but little rain here, but he had no doubt but the wind and thunder would be terrific.

He was satisfied, also, that, if there was a heavy rain to the eastward, the streams and gorges would empty their flood into the San Juan and fill it to overflowing, even endangering the valley with inundation. But nothing daunted he pushed on for miles.

Suddenly Humility came to a stop, and manifested signs of having sighted the game they were following.

A prolonged glare of sheet lightning revealed the form of the Centaur moving along, with the lofty, majestic tread of a stately buck, a short way before him, its bearded face turning from side to side and glancing backward over its shoulders, as though it detected the presence of danger.

It was following the river bank where the trees grew sparse, and now and then when the animal ascended a little rise in the surface of the ground, the hunter could see it outlined against the blazing sky and appearing like some Titanic monster, grim and grotesque.

Several times the ranger was tempted to fire upon it, but, as he could not aim with any certainty of success, he finally concluded not to run the risk of a shot through fear of frightening it away; and so he followed on—on upon the horrible creature that at times loomed up in the lightning's glare, then sunk from view in the blinding gloom that followed.

Sometimes he was close upon it, then again far behind. The creature moved on all the time with the same proud, stately gait, while its bearded face kept that constant movement from side to side, as though the lightning's glare blinded it.

Suddenly the ranger came to a halt, and exclaimed aloud to his dumb companion:

"Humility, what the nation are we going, pup—crazy? What are we follerin' and what are we follerin' it for? Have we journeyed through life all these years—through a thousand dangers, to be led to death by—by what? Durn the thing, what is it? It ain't human, nor it ain't beast, but it's both. Ah, now I've got it! Heavens, pup, what condemned fools we've been! That's the devil—the veritable old skeezicks himself, and like hundreds of others, we've been follerin' his Satanic majesty, scarcely knowin' it. Queer you didn't smell brimstone in his track, Humility. That's no mistake 'bout it bein' the superintendent of the sulphur-diggin's. He's got a human head, pup; cloven feet, and—well, he's got no horns now—reckon it's sheddin' time for horns; but it's no use whinin'—it's the old imp, and so we'd better make the best of our fool's errand, and turn noses promptly, and go ba—Jerusalem!"

A human cry burst suddenly upon his ears. It came from down the river, and on the wings of the storm, it seemed like a wail of distress.

Dan listened for a repetition of the cry. Away off toward the mountains he heard a faint rolling, rushing, roaring sound, as if the sluice-way of heaven had been rent asunder, and rivers of water were pouring down and spreading over the valley in one mighty, resistless tide.

"By Judea, pup, she's comin'!" exclaimed Dan, accustomed to talk aloud to his dumb companions as though they comprehended what he said. "The rain's been awful up mountainward. The gorges have all emptied their water into the river, and now it's comin'—a howlin'! How it sounds! Heavens, but it's awful! In ten minutes more it will be here and the river 'll be rushin' on bankful. Yes, pup, and it's beginnin' to rain a leetle sprinkle here, and now let us get to shelter."

They turned from the river and started away toward the bluffs.

"There again!" suddenly burst from Dan's lips.

"Broof!" barked Humility, softly.

Both had heard that cry of distress from down the river again.

"We must see into it, ole dorg," said the ranger, and turning, he glided rapidly down the river.

Those cries of distress grew plainer and plainer before him, the roar of the advancing avalanche of water louder and louder behind. Still he hurried on—he could not turn a deaf ear to suffering humanity.

He suddenly discovered that the sound came from out upon the river. He glanced off in the direction from whence it came, when in the lurid glare of the lightning he saw that which sent a shudder to his soul. In the middle of the river was an island barren of vegetation. It loomed up against the glaring waters plain and distinct. A post was planted in the center of this island, and to the post was bound a man in an upright position.

From this helpless creature's lips issued those cries of distress, for well he must have known that the torrent, whose thunderous tread was plainly audible, would sweep him from existence.

The quivering sheet-lightning that illumined the surrounding with the glare of the midday sun, showed the ranger how securely the helpless man was lashed to the post.

The water that separated the old borderman from the island was quite shallow, and the ranger was about to step down the bank and wade over to the helpless man's assistance, when he discovered the forms of several men standing on the opposite shore with rifles in their hands.

What did it mean? Why were they there? Had they bound that helpless man to the stake on the island?

There were few moments for idle speculation. The torrent was near. The rain was falling fast—the cries of the doomed man sounded above all.

Humility started suddenly up with a low, fierce growl.

Dan heard a slight rustle behind him, and turning, he saw the bushes near him suddenly parted, and a black, terrified face appear in the opening!

CHAPTER XXIX.

SLYLY AND THE TORRENT.

It was Slyly, the Weasel, that appeared before the ranger.

"Zip-ee, stranger!" exclaimed the young darkey; "did I skeer you bad?"

"Who are you, anyhow?—an imp of darkness?" responded Dan, confronting the boy, while Humility kept up his growling.

"I'm black as sin, massa—black as a chunk whittled out ob de night; but if you jis' make dat orhery-lookin' dog ob yourn' quit his snarl'n and take his teeth in, I'll come out ob here and tell you who I is."

Dan quieted his dog, and the little darkey slid out of the bushes like an eel.

"Now, 's Slyly, the Weasel, and live up to de ruins; and massa, if you can save dat young man out dar what de wicked men are goin' to kill, de young missus 'll never forgit to pray for you."

"Who is that man? and why is he fastened to that post?" asked Dan.

"He's Mister Shear-a-ding, and he's put dar to drown, 'kase he lubs de ole massa's gal. Ole Massa Hamallado is an awful bad man. But Lord, massa, don't you hear de torrent comin'?"

"I'm not deaf, nigger."

"Wal, can't you save de young man for Miss Zella's sake?"

"It's too late now; the torrent's here—oh! Jerusalem!"

"Oh, Lord!" groaned the boy.

With the rush and roar of a hundred trains of cars along their iron road, the torrent swept past them, bearing upon its foamy crest masses of floating timber and debris. It seemed utterly impossible that human life could withstand the awful tread of the seething giant. But no sooner had the head of the torrent passed by, and the water in its wake sought a general level in the bed of the river, than that wail of distress again issued forth upon the night.

Dan glanced over the now full, rushing river, and, to his surprise and horror, beheld the bound and fettered man still at his post. The island, however, was submerged, and the doomed man nearly covered. Only his head and shoulders were above the rushing tide.

The river was nearly bank-full and still rising rapidly. A few minutes more, and the life of Asa Sheridan will have been ended.

The young man's terror and mental torture were far more terrible than they would have been had he been consigned to the tiger-pit. It was by a miracle only that he escaped being ground to atoms under the heel of the flood-monster, to be tortured to death by inches as the water crept slowly up his breast and neck. He struggled with all the desperation of a madman to free himself, but the water had drawn his bonds all the tighter, and his efforts were as futile as a child's. His enemies had made sure that he would not escape, and then, to make assurance doubly sure, they stood upon the bank to watch him perish.

To shoot a man down seemed no pleasure to Leopold Hamallado. It was too soon over with him. He loved to see an enemy writhe in agony, as we have already seen in the case of Basil Walrayment. When he found that the two bears were dead—had been poisoned, his devilish brain was put to work to conjure up a substitute for the beasts. The storm muttering afar off suggested an idea. He knew by former observations what was sure to follow the storm in the mountains—the flooding of the San Juan. He made known his plans to his men, and with the captive at once repaired to the island to put them into execution. And so far, all had worked well, and with that fiendish delight which appeared to be the controlling element of their natures, they watched the form of the youth slowly sinking beneath the rising waters.

Slowly, and with all the horror in the touch of a slimy serpent, the water crept up the young man's neck. He could turn his head from side to side. He could glance along the surface of the lightning-lit waters and see it rolling around him. He could see the dusky forms of his tormentors standing on the high bank, but no friendly form was to be seen.

The water at length reached his chin. He saw that he had but a minute longer to live. The rushing river was black with floating logs and debris, swept down from the mountains; and it was only the post against which he was leaning that saved the young man from being crushed to atoms by these.

The last hope of earthly assistance faded from Asa Sheridan's breast, and he lifted to God in prayer his trembling voice.

Something brushed each cheek. He turned his head and saw that a huge forked log had caught astride of the post to which he was bound. Each prong was about ten feet in length by a foot and a half in diameter; and while Sheridan was contemplating each with that vague hope with which a drowning man grasps at a straw, a voice within a foot of him suddenly spoke:

"Stranger, ye're in a monstrous ticklish place, arn't ye?"

Sheridan bent his head to one side and saw the head of a man close up in the crotch of the huge fork. It was a thin, rough, bearded face, yet one calculated to inspire the suffering man with hope. His heart leaped with joy, and his lips articulated the imploring appeal:

"Help, stranger, or I'll drown!"

"I believe you," replied the man in the crotch of the log, reaching out and cutting young Sheridan's bonds; "now, just as soon as your hands are free, throw 'em up and cling to the logs. But keep yer head well behind the prongs, and then them devils can't shoot you. There, now, stranger; how's that?"

"I'm free!—great God be thanked! I am free once more!" the young man exclaimed, in a low tone. "Who are you, friend?—Heaven's instrument of mercy?"

"I'm familiarly known as Dakota Dan, the Triangler red-skin exterminator. That's two more of us back yet—one's Humility, my dorg, and the other's Patience, my mare—awful pre-dicament you war in, wa'n't it, youngster?"

"I was dying by inches, Dakota Dan," the young man responded; "but how are we to escape, now the log has lodged against this post?"

"Jist wait, youngster; the water 'll soon raise and boost the bark over the post, then away we'll go, high-low, down the river! Keep a hand on each prong to support yourself, and then we'll run no risks—there!—now!—here we go a-scootin'!"

Leopold Hamallado and his minions saw the great forked log lodge against the post. Its prong next to them concealed the youth's head from their view. But still they kept their watch until the top of the post had disappeared beneath the rising waves; and when the fork floated on, they never dreamed that it bore two human souls with it. Outwitted, defeated, they supposed the mad waves had covered their victim, and that the morning sun would rise upon a lifeless, bloated form standing erect upon the island, a tempting feast to those filthy-winged inhabitants of the air—the vultures!

CHAPTER XXX.

ON TERRA FIRMA.

"This 'ere is what I call boatin' under difficulty, youngster," said Dakota Dan, as he and Sheridan floated, swiftly down the roaring river; "I've sailed on canoes and other large vessels that there way, whar the accommodations war much better'n they are here. Most too much moisture 'bout this for me, stranger."

"I observe that you are inclined to take things coolly, old friend," said Asa.

"Yes, this water, especially. But, youngster, kick out vigorously with your left foot, and well try and 'gee' this 'ere craft 't'wixt the shore, and let's land. I never did like boatin'."

Asa complied with the ranger's request, and a perceptible change in the course of the log was observed. It veered off toward the right shore, and in a few minutes the men had effected a safe landing and sought the cover of the trees that fringed the river.

"Now then, young man," said Dakota Dan, "I'm in my element, and if you'll jist trip along with me up to whar Humility, my dorg, and ole Mortality, my rifle, are, I'll be much obliged to you."

"Dakota Dan, I am at your service in anything you may command," Asa said, as they started off up the river. "You have saved my life, and—"

"Certainly," interrupted the ranger, for he knew what was coming, "I've been doin' a great deal for sufferin' humanity for these thirty years, and it's jist as common far me to save a life as it is to wing a red-skin. But them war really robbers that halted you up thar, war they?"

"They were outlaws of the vilest character, but what led you to think they were?"

"A little black negro boy, that dropped from the clouds, told me they war. He war a cute little brat, I tell ye—called himself the Weasel."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Sheridan. "Has he gone?"

"Gosh, jings, no! Massa Shear-a-ding, here I is!" exclaimed a voice, and Slyly came bounding through the darkness, and seizing Asa by the hand kissed it with joy. "Oh, Cesars, massa Shear-a-ding! You don't know how glad I is dat you's safe. I told dat man it war you and he saved you; and now de young Missus 'll git me a whoppin' big plug ob tobakker. Ki-yi! ain't dis chile happy as a pickler?" and the youth executed a leap and a tumble that would have done credit to a young gymnast.

"Where is Zella, Slyly?" Sheridan asked.

"In de ruins locked up," replied the boy; "ole massa's jist been raisin' de partie' ole Scratch down dar. He shut de young missus up; cussed ole Huidah, de nigger cook, black; and whaled de vinner nation outen dis chile. Whew! but de ole sinner jist scotch!"

"What was the matter with the monster?" asked Asa.

"He war mad—jist hornet-mad 'bout de bears."

"What about the bears?"

"Jings! but if'll make you hair stiff up when I tell you. You see ole massa war gwine to put you in de tiger-pit and let de bears eat you up smack and smooth. But Miss Zella tell dis chile to pisen de bears, and gosh! I done it. And den's when d' storm begin to mitter; ole massa jist cave and dance. When he sees dar war a storm comin', away he went wid you to de island—swear he drown you, and away I poked arter him. I couldn't do anything, but I war awful tickled when dat gemman come up. I told him you war, and away he went to save you. Golly, massa, he's a bully ole chap."

Dan chuckled to himself.

"And your mistress is a prisoner?" asked Asa.

"Yes, sah."

"And can you get into her prison?"

"Yes, sah."

"Will you see her to-night, and tell her I am safe?"

"Yes, sah; anything else?" with a broad grin.

"Tell her to be patient—that I will rescue her as soon as I can get force enough together to capture the outlaws and all."

"Lord sakes, massa; if you takes de young missus away, and kill de robbers, what 'll come ob dis poor nigger boy?"

"I will see that you are well cared for, Slyly. You have been a faithful friend to your mistress and to me."

"Ki-yi! dat sounds good, massa; I's your huckleberry."

"Be careful that your master does not catch you in your going to Zella's prison."

"I'll see to dat, massa; but, scissors! wouldn't I like to tell ole massa dat you am safe."

"Why so?"

"Oh, jist to see him snap his teeth and grit his eyes."

Dakota Dan indulged in a fit of hearty laughter over the odd expressions of the lively little darkey.

"But I won't tell him, in course, massa," the youth continued.

"Then hasten back to the ruins and see Zella at once."

"All right, massa," and the boy was gone.

Dakota Dan and Sheridan continued on up the river till they came to where Humility was guarding his master's weapons.

"That's Humility, my dorg, stranger," said the ranger, and he went on and gave a detailed history of the animal and his wonderful exploits, winding up by inviting Asa to ac-

company him to the camp on the del los Pinos.

Sheridan gladly accepted, and the two started off up the river.

The young man's spirits became revived.

With the assistance of the soldiers, whom Dan informed him were so near, he hoped to be enabled to effect the rescue of Zella, and the capture of the outlaw band.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 266.)

A FEW WORDS TO FRIBLE AND DELICATE WOMEN.

By R. V. PIERCE, M. D., of the WORLD'S DISPENSARY, Buffalo, N. Y.

Knowing that you are subject to a great amount of suffering that delicacy on your part has a strong tendency to prolong, and the longer it is neglected the more you have to endure and the more difficult to cure your case becomes, I, as a physician, who is daily consulted by scores of your sex, desire to say to you, that I am constantly meeting with those who have been treated for their ailments for months without being benefited in the least, until they have become perfectly discouraged, and have almost made up their minds never to take another dose of medicine, nor be tortured by any further treatment. They had rather die and have their sufferings ended than to live and suffer as they have. They say they are worn out by suffering and more discouraging, we certainly cannot conceive, and were there no more successful mode of treating such difficulties than that the principles of which teach the reducing and depleting of the vital forces of the system, when the indications dictate a treatment directly the reverse of the one adopted for them, their cases would be deplorable indeed. But lady sufferers, there is a better and far more successful plan of treatment for you; one more in harmony with the laws and requirements of your system. A harsh, irritating, caustic treatment and strong medicines will never cure you. If you would use rational means, such as common sense should dictate to every intelligent lady, take such medicines as embody the very best invigorating tonics and nervines, compounded with special reference to your delicate system. Such a happy combination you will find in my Favorite Prescription, which has received the loudest praise from thousands of your sex. Those largely, tireless sensations causing you to feel scarcely able to be tional drain that is sapling from your system all your former elasticity, and driving the bloom from your cheeks; that continual strain upon your vital forces that renders you irritable and fretful, may all be overcome and subdued by a persevering use of that marvelous remedy. Irregularities and obstructions to the proper workings of your systems are relieved by this mild and safe means, while periodical pains, the existence of which is a sure indication of serious disease that should not be neglected, readily yield to it, and if its use is kept up for a reasonable length of time the special cause of these pains is permanently removed. Further light on these subjects may be obtained from my pamphlet on diseases peculiar to your sex, sent on receipt of two stamps. My Favorite Prescription is sold by druggists.

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A few Advertisements will be inserted on this page at the rate of fifty cents per line, nonpareil measurement.

Sports and Pastimes for 1875.

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DIME

Guide to Swimming.

A SUMMER NIGHT POEM.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

I sit here thinking of your face,
(A flitting moth just made me wink.)
So clothed with loveliness and grace,
(There goes a black bug in my ink.)
Before my pensive eye it gleams,
(A million buzzing wings I hear.)
Like angel faces seen in dreams,
(A bug is diving in my ear.)

No other face has power to bind
(The bugs will surely quench the light.)
The tender fancies of my mind
(How the musketeers sing and bite!)
Or throw about me such a spell
(There is no air about the place.)
Of sweet content no words can tell
(The sweat is streaming down my face.)

My heart beats in its happiest mood
(Oh, what a torment are those gnats.)
To know my love is understood;
(For mercy sake those awful cats!)
Only for thee, dear one, I sigh,
(I sighed a bug in when I sighed.)
And who could love thee dear as I
(That insect has a monstrous stride.)

Upon my lip that good-night kiss
(Into my face those insects fly.)
Still lingers with a touch of bliss,
(I've caught a small moth in my eye.)
Indeed, 'twill never pass away,
(A roach is reading what I write.)
But linger there for many a day,
(How hot it is, I'm smothered quite!)

What joy is mine no one can know;
(A something is crawling down my neck.)
With hopeful light my spirit glows,
(And in my hair there is a peck.)
My ear rings with thy latest words
(I'm pestered till I'm nearly dead.)
Whose tone is sweeter than a bird's,
(I'll blow the light and go to bed.)

LEAVES
From a Lawyer's Life.

BY A. GOULD PENN.

XI.—Our Wealthy Client.

He was an old gentleman, perhaps sixty-five, dressed in a faded russet suit, yet with an air of respectability and good-breeding, sporting a fine, gold-headed cane not exactly in keeping with his general appearance. His manners were brusque and hearty, and his ready tongue kept up a continual run of conversation somewhat erratic, it is true, but indicative of a cultured mind.

"Seniour, sir, Seniour, is my name—Erasmus Seniour—lineal descendant of the once noble family of Seniours in England. Best of blood, I assure you," he said, by way of introducing himself.

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Seniour; be seated," and I set out for him my own easy chair.

Removing his dilapidated beaver, he brushed it carefully with a huge red silk handkerchief, and laid it upon my desk in company with his cane, and then, after moving the chair in three separate places, finally sat down in it with a nervous start.

"Yes, sir, best of blood," he resumed; "the Seniours are always wealthy; immense landed estates in England, sir."

I looked up at Ayres, who was busily writing at his desk, and a suspicious smile lurked in the corners of his mouth. I began to think I was doomed to be horribly bored. The old gentleman continued to rattle away in his disconnected style, until I began to lose all patience, and interrupted him:

"Well, Mr. Seniour, our time is precious just now; what can we do for you to-day?"

"Yes, yes. I was coming to that. Business, sir, business. I wish to consult you on a matter of great importance—great importance, sir. Money involved; one hundred thousand dollar claim, sir."

Of course my attention was at once fixed upon him, and Ayres dropped his pen to listen. The old gent might be a conceited old chatter-box, but if there was money concerned what lawyer would refuse to listen?

"I presume you have heard of the great Universal Life Assurance Company; immense affair, doing an unparalleled business; millions of surplus, and all the latest approved forms of policy issued."

Can he be some high-pressure life insurance agent? I thought. He certainly seemed cheeky enough, and talked readily enough, but I would listen further.

"Of course you have, sir, of course you have! You behold in me one who has suffered at their hands. Yes, sir, suffered great loss! baffled, cheated and at last driven to resort to the law to maintain my rights," and, becoming more excited and nervous, he arose from the chair and began pacing the floor, gesticulating as he went.

Then he was not an agent to bore me with his solicitations! I breathed easier on learning this fact, but was still impatient to have him come to the subject of his business.

"Ah, sir, Mr.—Ah, your name?"

"Smith," I prompted, short enough.

"Ah, yes, Smith, likewise a noble old family name of good blood, sir—good blood. Well, Mr. Smith, as I was about to remark, my claim against this villainous Life Company is just. I have the necessary papers, sir, to prove all. I have wealth, too, and can pay you well for your trouble, and as he paced back and forth across the floor he glanced warily about as if to fix in his mind every object the office contained.

I was more than ever disgusted with his loquacity, but exercising all my patience I resolved to see what might come.

"Yes, sir, I have wealth, and can fee you," he resumed, changing the direction of his tireless walk over the floor. "I am worth thousands—ay, millions have I at command. You have only to name your price, sir."

Surely that was liberal enough, and refreshing news to a lawyer who seldom even heard of such wealthy clients, but I replied:

"Never mind about that, Mr. Seniour; let me hear a full statement of your case."

"Certainly, certainly—I hope my walking will not annoy you. I am getting old, sir, and nervous. I cannot sit still, especially with this great scheme pressing on my brain," and with his huge bandanna he wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"I had a beloved brother, Mr. Smith, a man of fortune, but a bachelor. I have in my pocket a ten year term endowment life-policy on his life. He is dead, Mr. Smith, and the company refuses to liquidate."

I began to see through the business now.

"Justice is justice, my dear sir," he rattled on; "this policy has not lapsed; the obligation remains good, sir, as against the great Universal. My brother's death was natural—as was natural, I say—no fraud whatever, and as beneficiary I demand the sum of one hundred thousand dollars. But the great Universal only settles such large losses at the end of the law, sir. I know that to be true; they make money by delay. I will law them to the extent of my fortune, sir, I will," and he strode the room more fiercely.

"Let me see your papers, if you please, Mr.

Seniour," I asked, in hopes of getting him down to business.

"Certainly, the papers. Here you have it. Policy number five thousand and eighty-six, sir," and he fumbled in his pocket, eventually producing a crumpled and soiled document, which he handed me as if with some reluctance.

While I examined the paper, he continued his nervous march back and forth, and his tongue ceased not to run as glibly as before, but I paid no heed, while I proceeded to read the policy.

He had spoken truly. Here was a policy on the life of one Alfred Seniour for one hundred thousand dollars, naming one Erasmus Seniour as beneficiary, and all apparently in good shape.

"Has there been any failure to pay these yearly premiums?" I asked.

"None whatever, all paid up regularly, sir—my brother was not the man to neglect so important a duty, sir. My brother was—"

"When did your brother die?" I interrupted, as I saw he was about to launch out in an endless talk again.

"Fifteenth of October, sir—proof of death duly made out, forwarded—claim long since due, sir."

I was now ready for business, and with some difficulty persuaded the old man to take a seat at my table while I prepared notes from which to draw my petition. Nor was it an easy task.

Erasmus Seniour was certainly a strange man, and it took all my tact and persuasion to keep his mind on the subject. His restless eyes would wander, and his ready tongue confused me, which, added to his nervous manner, irritated me not a little. Had it not been a claim of such magnitude and of such apparent justice I would have dismissed him without stopping to investigate.

So, having at length obtained the facts, I assured Mr. Seniour that we would at once push his claim to a trial, but also added that it would take a long time, as those wealthy companies, when they resisted such claims, invariably carried them to the higher courts.

"Very well, very well, Mr. Smith; money is no object; I have plenty of it—plenty, sir. Push this matter to the utmost—employ assistance if you need it," and he took up the policy and hastily hid it away in his pocket.

The case was opened, and we placed in evidence the policy, and certain receipts and papers that went to make out our claim.

"Mr. Clerk, swear Erasmus Seniour."

Accordingly the old man was sworn, and begged to be allowed to walk about while giving his testimony, which request was granted, and he strode to and fro, swinging his cane, while I plied him with questions.

It was with great difficulty I kept his mind fixed upon the subject, as he was more loquacious and uneasy than ever, but I got enough from him to confirm the claim of our pleadings, and then left him to the mercy of the city attorneys for cross-examination.

"You say your name is Erasmus Seniour?"

"Yes, sir—Seniour, sir—Erasmus Seniour, a lineal descendant of that noble family—"

"Stop! stop!" fiercely cried the interlocutor.

An audible tee-hee from some person standing near caused us all to glance around.

The witness stopped in his tireless walk, and gazed with open mouth at the person who had laughed.

A couple of grinning lackeys came forward, and each took a place beside the old man, whose drooping head and trembling knees acknowledged their authority.

"Please, sir," said one of the men, addressing me, "we're after the old man."

"What do you want with our witness?" I exclaimed, rising to my feet, angry at such presumption.

"The old man has been out over a month, and we never found him until this blessed minute," replied one of the grinning lackeys.

Like a shot the truth flashed upon me, and I sunk back into the chair, my face as red with mortification and rage as a boiled lobster.

Then all was explained.

Erasmus Seniour was not what he claimed to be; his true name was George Carter, a harmless lunatic who had been confined in a private asylum some twenty miles distant.

Life insurance had unbalanced his mind, and was the theme of his conversation continually. By some means he had evaded his guards, and had stealthily entered a gentleman's house, where he fell upon the papers, and his teeming brain had invented a story that had a great deal of truth in it.

The policy of insurance was a valid claim, hence the company was as completely taken in

in its attempt to resist it as we were in trying to enforce it.

The joke was a heavy one on us all, and to this day my colleagues sometimes throw up to me my rich client and the expected fee.

The Toltec Prophetess.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

ACCORDING to Mexican history, the Toltecs were more polished than the various nations that succeeded them. They understood the art of working in gold and silver, and possessed some knowledge of astronomy and chronology.

Their paintings, though rude, betrayed genius and originality; and in the beautiful mosaic work, that delighted the eyes of the Spanish conquerors, they never have been excelled.

When Cortez landed on the soil of Mexico, there remained in the land he was to conquer the sole survivor of the Toltec race; but before the ring of Spanish steel saluted Montezuma's ears the Toltecs were extinct.

And my pen shall tell the story of that last survivor.

It was late one night when one of the Indian lords of the Aztec empire was ushered into the presence of Montezuma. He was an individual of commanding mien, and his habit proclaimed him a man of wealth. His head-dress contained feathers worn solely by the nobles, and there were other insignia of rank upon his person. In features he was remarkably handsome, and his arms, bare from the shoulders, and braceleted, were synonyms of strength.

Montezuma frowned when his eyes first fell upon the native noble; but he soon dissipated it, and a smile overspread his sad face.

"Welcome, my Lord Xolac," he said to the Mexican. "I am glad that you have penetrated the palace. What say the people on the streets now?"

"They talk continually about the child of the sun," replied the Indian, dropping upon one of the rich divans before the emperor, who reclined in state on a magnificent couch.

"They long to see him."

The frown again darkened Montezuma's face.

"They shall see him!" he said, with the firmness that afterward deserted him; "they shall see him on the altar of Cholula's god."

"My Emperor Montezuma is right," said the visitor. "The people will rejoice to see the white man on the altar. But I would speak to the emperor on another subject."

"Say on, my Lord Xolac," said the monarch. "If you would speak secrets, do not whisper them, for no one listens at the palace doors."

For a moment the Indian lord did not reply. He gazed intently into the Aztec ruler's face, as if he would read there the result of his nocturnal visit.

"I come," he said, at last, and with a smile,

"on my old errand. My love for Prince Huizotl's child has not diminished. With the waning days it grows stronger, and is, to-night, as strong as the mighty mountain that throws its snowy ashes over our land. My hand—my heart is for the empire! But give me the child, and I will help beat back the legions of the white man, nor will I cease until the last one quivers on our war-god's altar."

He ceased, and silence reigned throughout the royal apartment.

Montezuma had listened with compressed lips, and after the Indian's last words his fingers continued to toy with the beautiful feather-work that fringed his robe of state. Lord Xolac regarded the emperor intently.

"Zamina is young," Montezuma said, without looking up. "Beside my Lord Xolac, she is, indeed, a child."

"The better I can protect her!" said the noble, quickly, and with rising displeasure. "My palace is fit shelter for the head of Huizotl's child."

"True," acknowledged the monarch, with a low bow; "but I fear Zamina does not sufficiently love my Lord Xolac."

"Who loves she, then?" cried the noble.

"I know not!"

"Who, beside myself, has asked for her hand?"

The monarch did not speak, and the eyes of the Indian lord flashed fire in the silence that sealed his lips.

"I have a rival, then?" he cried, rising and clenching his hands before the emperor. "To whom hath Zamina been given?"

"To Tozeco, the young lord of Toluca."

"Enough!" said Xolac, biting his lips; "the emperor doeth good in all things; he cannot err. He saw that Tozeco was younger than Xolac and a fitter companion for Zamina, who is a child. Xolac will seek a wife elsewhere. May all the gods of our people smile upon Montezuma, and the hearts of Zamina and Tozeco!"

Then the interview was soon brought to a close, and Lord Xolac left the royal presence.

When he had passed beyond the august threshold a dark frown covered his face; and he grasped the shining hilt of his *itztl* knife.

"To the Tolucaud can she have been given?" he hissed; "but he shall never have her."

He passed to his own palace, a magnificent structure surrounded by beautiful gardens,



The Indian, with an exclamation of rage, started forward, but the magic stick held him back.

and sought his private chamber. There he paced the floor, shaking with rage, and gnashing his teeth. On the walls hung portraits of his ancestors, and their weapons of warfare over the frames. Rude pictures they were, but exhibited the fierceness that marred Lord Xolac's face; and, when he had looked upon all, he cried:

"They would not have endured this. I will not!"

Then, having drained a glass of distilled *mezoal*—the wine of the country—the Indian lord left the chamber, and passed out of the palace.

"I will consult her," he said to himself. "I will see what the stars denote. She is the last of her race, and the wisdom of all her people is with her. The stars may say that Xolac will never see the white men. If he is not to behold their faces, others who live to-night shall not as well."

He crossed the garden in the rear of his palace, and came upon a small but magnificent structure that proved itself a temple.

It stood in the middle of a circular plot of ground well covered with flowers and *cacti*, and seemed the abode of some fairy queen.

It was the abode of a strange woman, who from the hue of her dark skin—more delicate than that of the Aztecs—had received the sobriquet of the White Spirit. She was what she claimed to be—the sole survivor of the Toltec race. Her prophecies had on different occasions filled Montezuma with alarm, and one lately delivered had caused the monarch to tremble.

Lord Xolac approached the temple with manifestations of dread.

He kept his hand on his *itztl* knife, and tried to walk without crushing a flower. But as they bloomed by myriads in the gardens surrounding the temple, he could not avoid all, and his sandals crushed hundreds of the fairest ones.

The Toltec prophetess dwelt alone, and no man had ever crossed the threshold of her abode. He must be bold who would attempt to do so, for it was said that with a sign she could strike a person dead.

But Lord Xolac's bravery was beyond reproach; he was a man of war with a warrior's heart, and would not scruple to commit sacrilege when his heart was full of anger.

That night he was passion's plaything.

He neared the temple rapidly, and the brilliant moon showed him all its outward beauties.

But all at once he came to a halt, for the White Spirit stood in his path!

With an ejaculation of surprise, the Indian lord started back, and gazed without speaking at the being, who seemed to have risen from the ground.

She looked like a spirit, clad in white robes as she was, and Lord Xolac felt her magic stick touch his forehead before a word was spoken.

"The Aztec chief seeks the revelations of the stars," the woman said. "They have spoken concerning him. Will he listen?"

"I who have proceeded thus far will not turn back!" the noble answered, with the air of the bragart. "Xolac is a warrior, and he can listen to the gentle voices of the distant spheres."

As he spoke, he drew his athletic form to its true stature, and folded his arms on his breast.

"Let the stars speak through the mouth of their white priestess," he said.

For a moment the prophetess was silent, and then her voice, musical and sweet, fell upon the warrior's ears.

"The stars have spoken ill concerning Lord Xolac," she said. "He has turned from his monarch; he is a traitor!"

When she paused, the Indian, with an exclamation of rage, started forward; but the magic stick held him back.

"Listen," she cried, "or fall dead at the Spirit's feet! Lord Xolac will never see the white faces, for his nights have been numbered."

"I came not here to hear of naught but death," cried the Indian. "What say the stars of Xolac's love?"

"Ah! the man of war wants a prince's child; but she is not for him. Her lover has been chosen, and Lord Xolac, the traitor, will never touch her with his hands."

"The stars lie!" hoarsely cried the Indian, and the knife flashed from his belt. "No longer shall they curse the land with falsehoods through their deceiving priestess!"

He sprang forward with the last words ringing from his lips, and his strong arms caught the woman from the ground.

The next instant he was bearing her swiftly toward the temple, before the sacred door of which he halted.

"Unhand me, traitor!" she cried, struggling in his grasp. The stars have never lied!"

He answered her with a fiendish laugh, and struck her once with his *itztl* knife.

Then he lowered her to the ground, and her voice fell faintly on his ears.

"Thy nights are numbered, Lord Xolac; the bluishings of the dawn thou shalt not see!"

The last of the Toltecs was dead!

After gazing on her for a moment, the murderer turned on his heel, and quitted the place.

He crossed the gardens; but not in the direction of his own palace. On the contrary, he walked toward the royal residence of Montezuma.

Before he reached it, clouds were passing over the disk of the moon, and the city was alternately in light and shade.

"I will prove the stars false prophets," the Indian murmured. "This night I will touch Huizotl's daughter with my hands."

His words were full of deep meaning, and there was murder in his dark eyes. He knew that the only child of Prince Huizotl, one of the emperor's brothers, dwelt in the palace. Montezuma was her guardian, and long and faithfully had he filled the office. She was very beautiful, and learned in all the arts known to the Aztec world.

Lord Xolac, having been a frequenter of the palace for years, knew the situation of Zamina's chamber. He knew how to reach it without disturbing any one, and he did not pause after the slaying of the prophetess until he found himself beside the couch of the prince's child.

He saw her sleeping quietly, and the moonlight, which now and then stole in at the window above the couch, showed him her angelic, childish face and gently-heaving bosom.

He gazed until a dark expression covered his face, and as he silently drew the knife, his lips moved.

"Tozeco shall never wed thee! Montezuma may give a life, Xolac can take one. Now will his hand touch Prince Huizotl's lovely child!"

Slowly the keen *itztl* blade crept above his head, and he sprang at the sleeping girl with a warrior's oath.

But he never touched her skin.

When he touched the couch, he stopped, dropped the knife, shivered like a man suddenly struck by an icy blast, and fell back!

In the moonlight on the floor he lay—dead!

There they found him; the blood of the Toltec prophetess stained his blade.

The stars had not lied, for Xolac, after his last interview with Montezuma, had determined to betray the empire into the hands of Cortez.

Soon after the Indian's death, Zamina wedded Lord Tozeco, and the people declared that the hand of Mexico's god had stricken Xolac in the royal palace.

Beat Time's Notes.

JOCKEY. The fastest time ever made was by a horse I own named Belchazzer. It made a mile in 1:30. I forgot to ask the driver if it was hours or minutes.

THE man who carried home a dozen eggs in two coat-pockets from Ewing's, last night, was up this morning giving him fits for selling him bad eggs; the insides of them were not rotten but the outside were.

I SHALL not make garden this spring. I intended to have my garden painted by a first-class artist. Onions will be painted true to life with the exception of the scent, the peas will stand out in full relief; beans will look as natural as life; radishes will almost tempt you to pull them on first thought—but on second you won't. This garden will be painted with most artistic neatness. It will save much hard work this season, and I think, on the whole, it will be of more profit than any season of gardening which I have had. I suggested the idea to Thompson, and he said I must be particular to have it well embellished with weeds or it wouldn't look like my garden. He went away in advance of a boot.

I AM one of the most accomplished musicians of the day, or evening. My favorite instrument is the bass drum, and I have no equal. I can play any tune upon it no matter what it may be, or how difficult. Thomas said I can finger the drum with more perfection than any living drummer. I can set the music of the most complicated masterpiece before me and play it on the drum in such a style that people feel for their handkerchiefs or a rock. It is perfectly wonderful. I not only play the notes but bring the words out with them on the drum. This is more than has ever been done before. One critic says my drum-stick always comes down on the right place, and that my touch is of exquisite skill. Another says I can hit harder than any musician he ever saw. Another says I make a hit every time I play. Another wrote that the value of my music can only be estimated by pounds. Another affirmed that I was a dead beat on the drum. Come around some evening and sit out on the fence.

BEAT TIME.